

MARCH 1914

PRICE 15 CENTS

THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE





"A PROUD DAY FOR RASTUS"

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MARCH RED BOOK MAGAZINE

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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE is issued on the twenty-third of the month preceding its date, and is for sale by all newsdealer after that time. In the event of failure to obtain copies at news-stands, or on railway trains, a notification to the Publishers will be appreciated. Advertising forms close three weeks prior to the time of issue. Advertising rates on application.

THE RED BOOK CORPORATION, Publishers, North American Building, CHICAGO
LOUIS ECKSTEIN, President CHARLES M. RICHTER, Business Manager

RALPH K. STRASSMAN, Advertising Manager, 1172 Fifth Avenue Building, New York
R. M. PURVES, New England Representative, 201 Devonshire St., Boston LONDON OFFICES, 5 Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London, W. C.
Entered as second-class matter April 25, 1905, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

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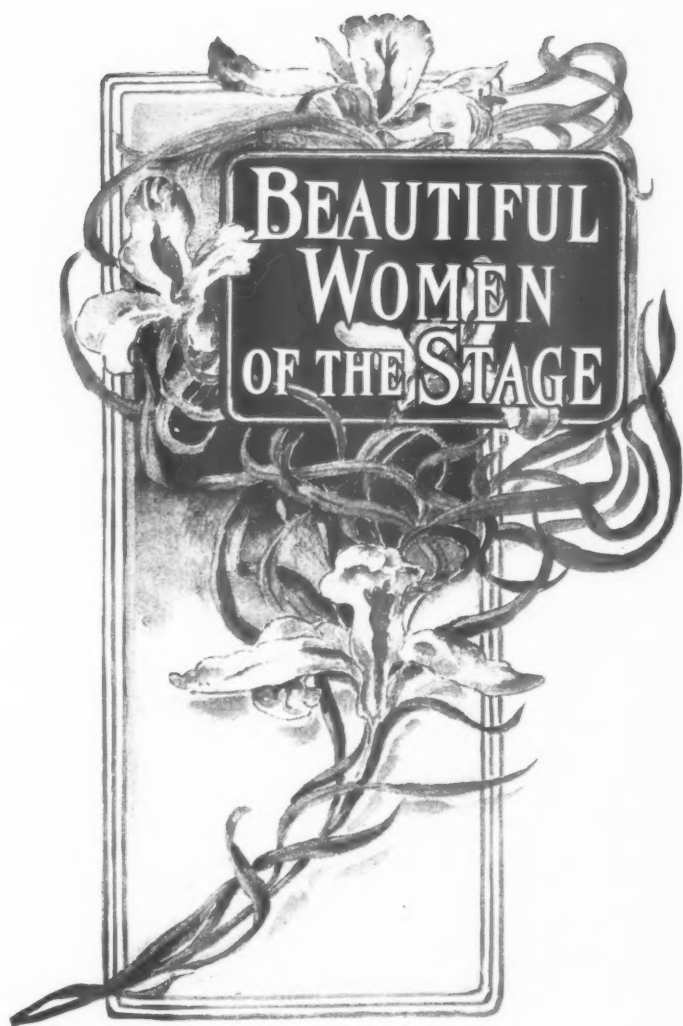
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HILDA KEENAN

Hilda Keenan acted in Chicago with Grace LaRue in "Molly May" in 1910. She then appeared with her sister Frances in "The Matinee Maids," a musical act, in vaudeville. Miss Keenan first came into prominence by her acting of the slangy *Aggie* in "Within the Law," in Chicago, in July, 1913. She is a daughter of Frank Keenan.

Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago





MRS. EVELYN NESBIT THAW

Evelyn Nesbit first won attention for her personal beauty as long ago as 1900, in a wee bit of a part in the New York Casino production of "Florodora." Shifting to the mercantile aspects of her art, it is interesting to know that she has been "one great attraction," as the managers phrase it, ever since the morning when the milkman left the Matteawan gate open. Thus, Chicago paid something like \$30,000 in a single November week to observe her as a tangoiste.

Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago





FRANCES NELSON

Miss Nelson, too tall for the "broiler" division, and too short for the "show-girl" line-up, and too proud to be classified by so inexact a word as "medium," found a way out of it all by taking up the art of acting. She has appeared in "Ready Money" and

"The Silver Wedding," among other plays, and is now to be observed in the stage-version of Robert W. Chambers' "Iole."

Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago





ADELE ROWLAND

Adele Rowland first attracted attention in Richard Carle's production of "The Maid and the Mummy," and made her big hit in "Miss Hook of Holland." She appeared in "A Prince of To-Night," "The Flirting Princess," and "A Modern Eve," and in the last named popularized the song "Good-By, Everybody." Recently she has been appearing in "A Trip to Washington."

Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago





MIZZI HAJOS

Mizzi Hajos was born in Budapest, of parents said to belong to the minor nobility. Studied for a while in Vienna and at sixteen took to the comic opera stage. She came to America to sing the leading part in "The Barnyard Romeo," a burlesque on "Chanticleer," and since then has had employment in "The Spring Maid," "The Rose Maid," "Her Little Highness." She is now singing in "Sari," which is a translation of Emerich Kalman's "Der Zigeunerprimas" ("The Gypsy Chief").

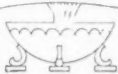
Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago



STELLA HOBAN

Stella Hoban was born at Muskegon, Mich., May 29th, 1891. Made her debut two years ago on tour with "The Prince of Pilsen." She next found employment in "The Man from Cook's," March, 1912. Since then she has been singing in "Oh! Oh! Delphine."

Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago





MARIAN DALE

Miss Dale's career, to date, has been marked by little of note save the rapt admiration wrung from audiences by her personal beauty. She is a contributor to what is still called "vaudeville" by its most distinguished entrepreneurs; and that department of the theatre has proved to be admirably preparatory for any one of a wide choice of careers. Miss Dale is mindful of the fact that Lillian Russell began in vaudeville, and that some of her rival beauties finished in vaudeville.

Photograph by Algett Studio, Chicago



KATHERINE HARRIS

Katherine Harris (Mrs. John Barrymore) made her debut soon after her marriage, appearing first under the name of Katherine Blythe in "Uncle Sam," in Chicago, in September, 1911. Acted with her husband in W. J. Hurlbut's "Half a Husband," in 1912; played with him in "Anatol" in Chicago, and in one episode from the play in vaudeville. Played in "A Thief for a Night," and later in 1913 in "Believe Me, Xantippi." All these appearances were made with her husband.

Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago





GERTRUDE HITZ

Gertrude Hitz began her career five years ago in a stock company in Cleveland. Her work attracted the attention of Margaret Anglin, who employed her to play the ingenue role in "Green Stockings." William T. Hodge, seeing her in that play, offered her a position in his company. She has been with him continuously since, and is now prominent in the cast of "The Road to Happiness."

Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago



WILDA BENNETT

Miss Bennett drew this season one of the most desirable of ingenue characters—that of the blind heroine of "A Good Little Devil." Unfortunately, the play was withdrawn so early in the season that her appeal in the part was limited to very few cities. She won, however, some excellent notices.

Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago



ROSE WINTER

Miss Winter, in the opinion of many, has more to do than she has done. She was with Eddie Foy for a season in "Over the River," and then in the Chicago run of "A Trip to Washington." The *Chicago Tribune* at that time described her as the "greatest stage-beauty since Lillian Russell." When, on Dec. 12th, 1913, The *Chicago Examiner* gave its annual benefit for the poor, Miss Winter proved herself a gifted artiste in travesty by her portrayal of the egg-obsessed wife in William DeMille's skit called "Food."

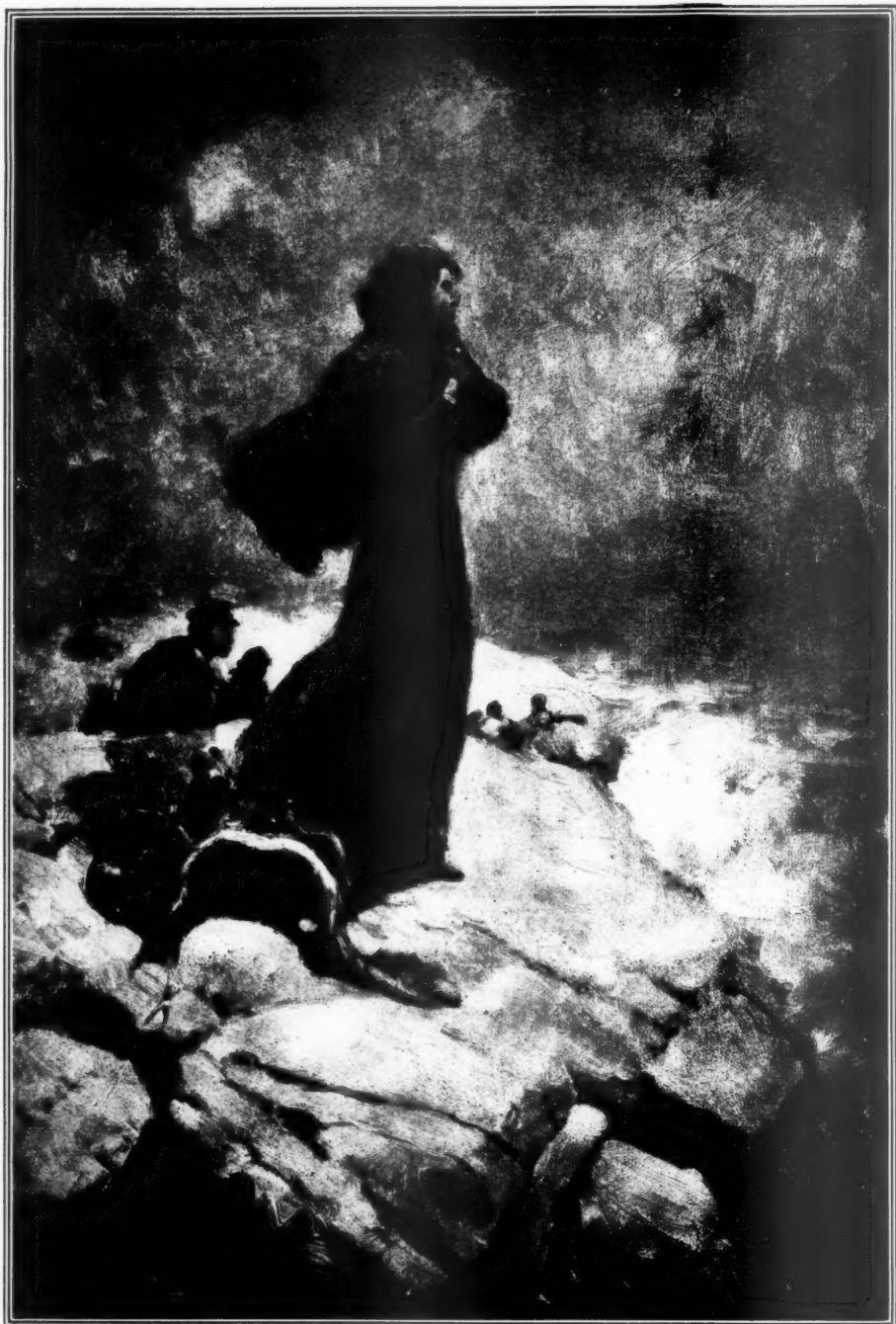
Photograph by M. Jett Studio, Chicago



ELEANOR CHRISTIE

Miss Christie has thus far served Thespis largely in a decorative capacity. She is what used to be called a "show-girl," but when that term's usage grew to comprehend mere handsome girls more than five feet four inches tall, Miss Christie was among the first of her sisterhood to rebel. She argued that, when she left Broadway, at all, it was because she possessed geographical curiosity, and not because a manager paid her money Tuesdays. Since then she has been identifiable as "Miss Christie—of The Follies," you know.

Photograph by Moffett Studios, Chicago



PAINTED BY DOUGLAS DUER

"Mary forgot that she was wet to the skin and cold to the bones. She stood in the same place as she had stood the day before, as if she had not even moved."

—From Frederick R. Bechdolt's thrilling tale of the sea, "Fate and Tom Loftus," page 92.

March
1914

THE
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Vol. XXII
No 5

RAY LONG, Editor

CHERE come to the office of *The Red Book Magazine*, every month, hundreds of manuscripts. Each one is considered carefully. Yet so exacting is our standard that out of these numerous 'scripts, we seldom can find more than a small percentage by famous writers or unknowns, which we consider worthy of presenting to our readers—and we probably receive more manuscripts from really famous story writers than any other monthly magazine.

The *Red Book* has the highest standard for stories of any magazine in the country. There is seldom a month that some one of our stories does not attract wide attention from other fields. For instance, "Whose Wife?" by Albert Payson Terhune, in a recent number, produced six offers within three weeks for the right to dramatize it. It will appear next season. Before the January number had been on the news-stands two weeks, two book publishing houses were seeking the right to issue "Our Baby's Bath." And "Our Baby's Bath" was the second story by Mr. York to be published, his first effort having appeared in the November *Red Book*. The competition among the book houses for the right to publish the "Kazan" stories has only been exceeded in recent years by the struggle among them for the book rights on "What Will People Say?" From present indications, "The Passionate Friends" will attain the biggest sale of any H. G. Wells book in this country.

There is a remarkable instance in connection with "They that Walk in Darkness," by Leigh Gordon Giltner and W. Carey Wonderly, to appear in the April *Red Book*. So greatly has the fame of this story spread in literary and dramatic circles, that offers for the dramatic rights have been received by the authors *before the story has been published*. The story is so unique and so dramatic that it has been advertised in advance by word of mouth by those who have heard of it.

There are no two ways about it—The *Red Book* is publishing the best fiction that is being written. *It is setting the pace in the magazine world.*

"Ice-Water Johnny"

A NEW STORY OF AN OLD GAME, BY THE MAN WHO WROTE "THE JUCKLINS," "A KENTUCKY COLONEL," "BOLANYO," "OLD EBENEZER," "THE STARBUCKS," AND OTHER BOOKS THAT RANK AMONG THE BEST LOVED IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

HERE was a yellow fever flurry, and just before the train reached the Georgia line I heard some one say, "When we get over there the health officers will come aboard, and if you haven't a health certificate they'll take your temperature and put you off if it happens to be high." On some of the passengers this might have fallen as distressful news, but to me it came as a sort of balm. In being a little more fortunate or a trifle more thoughtful than our neighbors there is a sort of perverse comfort, and as a bill of health had been given to me in Chattanooga, I sat back in enjoyable armament against the threatened invasion.

Just then there entered the coach an old gentleman whose appearance was enough to take my mind off the subject—a man known up and down romantic rivers and over great territories of blooming cotton lands as the most characteristic remnant of the Old South. Military, without that persistent and self-conscious air which shouts of camps and battles, and a gentleman by courteous instinct, he brought to mind the graces together with the impulses of a lordly day forever gone.

I knew him in an instant; in fact, I might have been allowed the honor of friendship with him, for more than once in years now flown he had "fathered me" with a stack of chips at the table where often we are not to eat, but, like *Polonius*, to be eaten. Now he did not see me, but took the seat just in front; and I did not speak to him, it being my whim to let him sit there for a time and then to spring myself upon him as a surprise.

Soon I saw that something had gone wrong with him. With his broad white

hat he fanned his flushed face, muttering. Just then the health officers came aboard. With other passengers they were quick and sharp in their demands, but approaching him, their manner changed to gentler and more deliberate mood.

"Colonel," one of them made inquiry, "have you a health certificate?" His name was unknown to them, but they knew that he must be a colonel.

Continuing to fan himself he answered: "No, and I don't want one either. Go away, please."

"Yes, but if you haven't a health certificate we'll have to take your temperature."

"No, sir, you must not do that—just at this time."

"Then you have been exposed to yellow fever."

"I have not, sir."

"Why, then, do you object to having your temperature taken?"

The Colonel ceased fanning. "Well, sir, I don't want to advertise it throughout the state of Georgia, but I have just had an ace-full beaten back there, and I'll be hanged if this is a time to take my temperature."

They let him pass, and now I spoke to him. He arose, gripped my hand and beamed his good nature upon me. Instantly he forgot the calamity that had overtaken his ace-full, and reminded me of a night on the Mississippi River when with only two deuces he had made Harvey Mathews, of the *Memphis Ledger*, lay down three kings, thereby raking in a pot big enough to prop the finances of a South American republic. "Captain, sah," he said, "I don't know of a man that I'd rather meet. Somehow you always remind me of the times when I have won."

By Opie Read

ILLUSTRATED

BY

DAN SAYRE

GROESBECK



"Why do you object to having your temperature taken?"

I could have told him that with me his reminder was the reverse, but that I was just as glad to see him. In usual talk he always said "sir," but in connection with a title he said "sah." And in speaking to me it was "Captain, sah."

"Ah, let me see: the last time I met you was in Nashville, I believe, up over the old Turf Exchange," the Colonel went on, now seated beside me, his hand falling in gentle pat on my knee.

"Yes, I remember."

"Ah, and a great night. I stood numerous raises—foolishly, I admit—raises on a four-flush; made it, sir; beat three aces and reaped a jovial harvest."

"Yes, it is rather vivid in my memory, Colonel. I am the one who happened to sow the harvest and to lose it."

"Ah, Captain, sah, I had forgotten the loser, but I am sure that at the time I showed the proper consideration."

"You did, and passed me a stack."

His countenance beamed and gently he patted my knee. "I am glad of that. I don't know of a keener distress, sir, than being frozen out of a poker game. You sit back, every aspect of the world having changed color, and when the deal gets to you, the dealer, out of politeness, looks at you and asks

if you want a hand, knowing that he might as well ask a dead tree if it is going to bloom; and you say, 'Leave me out, please,' and the deal goes on and you look at the fellow with the big stack of chips and feel that if you should throttle him a pardon would be written out in heaven and handed down to you. From one countenance to another you look, seeking friendship, but ready to shoot a man if he exhibits pity for you; you snap your watch and remark hypocritically that it is time for you to be going, and men who have cheerfully taken your last cent, grunt you good-night.

"I have gone down into the dark of the cold world, looked up at the lights in a poker room and wished that I had a battery of artillery to shell the infernal place. I was in Chicago once, the coldest weather that was ever sneezed

from the North Pole. An utter stranger, Captain, sah, but a pernicious instinct led me to a place called the Minden Club, up two flights of stairs, over a variety theatre; and nothing short of a poker nose could have scented out the place, sir.

"With me I had about two hundred dollars and my return railway ticket, but as I was going home the next day, I felt safe to risk at least half of my capital. The look-out man, a big old fellow sitting at the head of the stairs, nodded at me pleasantly, and in I went, found four tables in full blast, and had to wait a little while before a seat offered, itching all the time, for the fever was on me hot."

Two men came from across the aisle and took the seat in front of us to catch the Colonel's story, and instead of being annoyed he seemed to be pleased with their attention.

"A house man got up finally and gave me his chair," the old gentleman continued. "A house man, gentlemen, presuming that you may not know, is one who is hired to play for the house and who can pass up openers for a year, if needs be, and—"

"I don't think I quite understand," broke in one of the listeners.

"Ah, I beg your pardon. I assure you that I wish to avoid being too technical. We were playing all jack pots and every man had to come in with an ante of fifty cents, five dollars limit on the open and the bet, subject to as many five-dollar raises as the case might warrant. And a man playing for the house, working on salary, will not take chances with a fairly good hand, but will pass until he gets almost a cinch, you understand; and then he will raise you.

"I don't like a limited game, as our friend the Captain, sah, well knows; it is intended to lure the sucker and handicap the good player; but as it makes more pots and is therefore more fruitful in rake-off, it is better for the house.

"Well, sir, the game was straight enough, it being the interest of the house to maintain a reputation for fairness, but with a number of house men in a game it doesn't have to be crooked to get your money eventually.

"As we were playing table stakes and were not permitted to declare for more than was in front of us, I bought a fifty-dollar stack, lighted my pipe and sat back in that keen succession of thrills leaping from card to card, from spot to spot. I was too full of zest, too quick to come in, and I lost my first stack in rather short order. But no matter; I would be conservative with the next. And I thought I was, but in a poker game you are ever sitting on the edge of the future, feeling secure enough and yet slipping. I picked up a full hand, pat, three tens and a pair of fours, opened the pot, second man from the dealer, and was delighted when a blear-eyed fellow said that he was more than pleased to raise me five.

"I tried to look scared, baiting others to come in over the raise, and one man did. I didn't want any cards; neither did the blear-eyed fellow, and this pleased me much, as a ten-full is far above the average pat hand. The last man drew one card and yawned. Remarking that my hand was as good as ever, I led off with a bet of five. It was raised five by Blear-eye, and with another tilt from the fellow that had yawned. Captain, sah, I shall not linger over a thing so painful. When all of my second stack was in, there were shown down a queen-full by Blear-eye and four trays by the yawner, which he had from the first, drawing one card to deceive.

"In a moment hope blazed up again and I bought another stack; and this one I anted mostly away. Now I had but fifty dollars left. But surely I could spare twenty-five of it. I did, and soon lost it. Then I discovered that the remaining twenty-five would not be enough to see me home. And surely they couldn't beat me always. Luck had to turn, and it was time. Out came my last cent, and toward the end of a weary and distressful hour I shoved back, broke, and with a man standing behind me waiting for my seat—a buzzard gazing on a dying horse.

"'Through?' he asked. 'Wait a minute,' I commanded, and went over to the desk to negotiate a loan on my railway ticket.

"I can't do anything. See Ben," said the desk man. I found Ben and asked him if he would let me have ten dollars on that valuable piece of paper until the following noon. He took my ticket, looked at it and shook his head.

"No good," was his judgment on a contract issued by one of the biggest corporations in this country, sir.

"No good?" I repeated. "I guess you'd better take another look."

"Then he smiled grimly and replied, 'I reckon you are the one to take the other look. It's a limited ticket and expired yesterday.'

"And now you will bet you, sir, that I did look; and it was a fact. The thing was as lifeless as a crow's nest in January.

"I begged his pardon, and he said, 'Don't mention it. Have a little drink before you go?' Drink! Captain, sah, you know that when a man has been chilled and fevered out of a game, a drink means no more to him than an additional feather in a dead rooster's tail. Liquor, sir, when I was burning up with fever! I looked back toward the table, hoping to catch the back of a human hand, but the buzzard was already in my chair, with the joints of his black wings on the cloth.

"Now there was nothing to do but to go, and out I went, hearing the wild shriek of the wind as I opened the door out upon the landing at the head of the stairs; and there sat the old look-out man, whistling melodiously as if a great tragedy had not just fallen on a fellow being. But he left off his music to speak pleasantly to me, 'You look like an old soldier,' he said.

"I was a colonel in the Confederate army," I told him, and good-naturedly he laughed. "That so? I was a colonel in the Union army, from Wisconsin. My name is Bliss."

"Glad to meet you, Colonel," I said,

and giving my name, I shook hands with him. Yes, sir, a colonel, and now look-out in a gambling house. I spoke of this sad fact, and smiling he said, 'All my own fault, I guess. Speculation in such places as these,' he added, nodding toward the torture chamber.

"The rattle of the chips smote upon my ears, and that awful fever-tremor so well known to some of us, Captain, sah, seized afresh upon me. This always comes when you are about to do a desperate thing, to act upon a resolve burning in your blood but not yet formulated in the mind.

"Colonel," said I, 'here is my card. I know it is foolish both to borrow and lend in a gambling house, but tonight I am desperate. Lend me ten dollars and as the Lord is my Judge I will send it back to you as soon as I get home.' I looked at him and it seemed that for ten minutes he was as still as a corpse. The wind howled; a sky-light rattled and the old building rocked on its foundation, but not an eyelash quivered, not a change came over the old soldier's countenance. Finally he drew up one arm, and then broke the long spell of silence.

"Colonel," he said, and with his first word my heart gave a wild bound, 'Colonel, as you must well

know, I can never have much money at a time, but I am going to let you have ten dollars if I never see another cent as long as I live."

"No, gentlemen; I did not throw my arms about him. I stood there cool and possessed, though the most grateful man in that town. On a slip of paper the old man wrote his name and address, and gave it to me along with a ten-dollar note.

"You may win," he said, knowing that I couldn't keep from playing, 'but the chances are against you.'

"On one foot I lingered long enough



He took my ticket, looked at it, and shook his head.

to acknowledge his wisdom, and then back I went to the table where I had lost my money. The squint-eyed fellow was cashing in, leaving a seat vacant, and calling for ten in chips I sat down.

"Gentlemen, sometimes the heavens smile. The devil is exceedingly busy, but sometimes he nods; and on this night he must have taken a snooze, for never in my life had so sudden and continuous a stream of luck poured upon me. I led those fellows a dog's life; and, sir, when old Satan awoke and stretched himself on his asbestos-cushioned throne, I was cashing three hundred and sixty-five of the most beautiful dollars ever printed by Uncle Sam.

"Now it was daylight, with men frozen out of the game dozing on their chairs. Ben smiled upon me and urged me to stay to breakfast, but I well knew what this would mean.

"No," I said, "I must now go down and get the liveliest railroad ticket they've got in this town," and out I went. In his look-out chair the old colonel was dozing, and I woke him, halted long enough to crumple a fifty-dollar note into his hand; and then I set quick sail for home, feeling like a conqueror returning from a foreign land. But gentlemen, the luck of that recovery cost me many a dollar. On numerous occasions afterward I tried to play out bad luck, and almost always failed. In poker parlance, a 'fetcher' is a fellow that runs out after more money, and everywhere he is considered as the weakest of suckers."

"But how *do* you beat the game?" one of the listeners inquired.

"By quitting it, sir. Poker lays tribute on some of the most honorable of men, not gamblers by instinct except as every man is. These men feel that they are cripples both financially and morally. And when you see one of them playing, he is, in his own resolve, playing his last game. It took me a long time to quit."

"And have you, Colonel?" I inquired.

"Well, yes, sir; I believe so. My resolution is stronger now than it has been for years."

"But you were in a game not more than half an hour ago."

"True enough, Captain, sah; but you must know that within half an hour a

strong-minded man can accomplish a great reformation. A new moral birth, sir, may come in the twinkling of an eye."

II

Late that evening at a hotel in Atlanta, the Colonel said to me: "Captain, sah, for many years, off and on, you have promised to come with me to my home in Alabama. The time is more than ripe, sir, and on this occasion you are going with me. I can show you the finest bass fishing the world ever saw. Will you?"

I promised, and it was arranged that we were to set forth on the following day. The old man was much pleased, talked about some old books in his library and of an old manuscript written by his great-grandfather in which he enumerated his slaves. He spoke of old china, of an ancient clock, of a rifle carried during the Revolution, but I could see that his mind was not wholly on his talk. He appeared to be restless, complained of the weather, though it was soft and delightful; his tobacco wasn't good, the brand he had smoked for years; nothing was right, and he fidgeted about, his hands nervous—untied his shoe and tied it again, fanned himself with his hat, though I knew he was none too warm. I let him fuss with himself; I could well guess what was coming, and it came.

"Captain, sah, there are times when a man—I might say when a man reaches back into the past and fetches himself out, vigorous in inclination, sir. There are times when nature demands a turning aside from our even way, when no matter what we have resolved upon we must suffer a change of current; when, gad, sir, we must do something. He might go to a show, but the drama, shadowed by that detective, the moving picture, has been captured and imprisoned; he might go to a concert, but there is no music such as old Dan Rice used to have in his circus; might go round to the livery stable and look at the horses, but the infernal automobile has driven them to the bone-yard."

He got out of his chair, walked up

and down the lobby for a time, halted in front of me and said: "I have something to tell you, sir, in great confidence. The fever is on me. Around in a street not far from here, in a sequestered neighborhood, there is a poker room winked at by the authorities, where I have been only once and where no one knows my name. In considering of my finances just now I discovered that I have about one hundred and eighty-seven dollars superfluous, sir. We can't leave here until morning and the time between now and

covered that the golf bug eats up the microbes of poker."

"I don't see how that can be, sir, when you can't play golf at night."

"But when you play golf all day you are too tired to play poker at night."

"Well, be that as it may, there is a game not far from here. Go around with me and I will pledge you my word that I will take up golf as soon as an opportunity presents itself—in the right way, you understand. Come."

I went with him, back into that old-



"Broke?" the Colonel inquired.

then—let me give you a truth: statesmanship does not consist of stinginess but in appropriate expenditure; and up comes the question as to how best to spend the time we find ourselves possessed of."

"Colonel," I replied, and I spoke the truth, "I have quit—haven't sat in a game for more than five years."

"You astonish me, sir. How did this happen to come about? What cured you?"

"Golf," I answered. "It has been dis-

time atmosphere of hope and distress; and there, gathered about two tables, were the same types of men so familiar to me in the years gone by. Science sweeps the world of fallacies honored for ages; discovery talks without wires across an ocean; gasoline wings men through the air, but these fellows knew no change; they were just the same in aspect as in the old days of the Mississippi River, their expressionless hands limp on the cloth.

An old poker player, knowing the

courtesy and the superstition of the game, never sits behind a player even though the player be a close friend, for if he does and the friend should lose a pot or two he begins to look around reproachfully. So I sat off on the outer hem of the game, but in a position of good view of the Colonel's table.

In front of the Colonel sat a young man out of keeping with these chaps of antiquity—a young man, dark of hair, classic of features and with a steadiness of nerve that bespoke the foot-ball player. Time after time the Colonel raked in a pot from him, but he never whimpered; sometimes he smiled.

Some of the other players called for drinks not supposed to be served in the metropolis of a state-wide prohibition. This young fellow, when asked by the darky as to what he would have, invariably answered that he preferred ice-water. After several orders of cold water the old timers, quick with nicknames, called him "Ice-Water Johnny." He did not resent it, smiled, and continued to feed the Colonel's topping hands.

Occasionally the old man would gaze at him through his glasses, and once he said that he was sorry to hold the higher hands all the time. "Ice-water Johnny" bowed slightly, with a fetching sort of grace, saying pleasantly that in the game of poker, as in the game of life, a man must expect more than one defeat. After a while the youth got all his money into a pot and lost. Shoving back, he said to the dealer, "Leave me out, please."

"Broke?" the Colonel inquired.

"I have gone as far as I can," he answered.

"Will you let me speak to you a moment, over here by my friend?"

"Certainly, sir, if you wish."

They came over and sat down near me. "Young man," said the old gentleman, "I think I have about fifty dollars of your money."

"No, sir; the money you won from me fairly and it belongs to you."

"Yes, I know. But don't you want to get back into the game?"

"I have more money, but I didn't think I ought to risk it."

"What, you quit loser with money in

your pocket? Let me tell you, sir, that you are a remarkable man; and this encourages me to say something to you. I take it that you are practically a beginner in the game."

The young fellow bowed.

"I thought so. But no matter how strong your character is now, if you continue to play poker it will weaken. Quit right now while you are strong. Poker will make a liar of any human being on the face of the earth. In his dealings among men he may remain honorable, but it makes him a liar and a cheat in his own family. Whenever he stays out late at night he must invent a lie. He is always afraid that something will arise to give him away; he is a coward, and seeking to square himself with his outraged conscience, he will give his wife the filthy money he has won and assure her it was obtained in a legitimate way."

"I don't know you and you don't know me; we are not likely ever to meet again, but please remember this from an old man whose most precious hours have been wasted: I wouldn't have my family know that I play poker for my right arm. At your age I could have quit. But I wouldn't listen to the advice of older men. But, sir, I intend to quit even now—as soon as my blood can get round to it. A young fellow can quit at once, but it is in an old fellow's blood and he has to wait. I have no right to ask a favor of you, but I am going to. Promise me that you won't play again, and in after life, sir, you will honor yourself for taking my advice."

The young man bowed. "I have played only a few times, at college. To-night I came in here just for the experience; and just now I resolved never to play again."

"I thank you, sir. Captain, sah, I'll cash in and we'll go to the hotel."

The next day, on the train, the old man sat looking back over the night before. "If I hadn't quit when I did, I'd have come away broke. I told you that I had one hundred and eighty-seven superfluous dollars. The fact is, I had the supremest use for that amount, at home, sir; and if I had lost last night I should now be one of the most miserable of wretches."

"At my house we must be guarded in our talk, for I wouldn't have my wife and daughter catch a poker expression—not for anything on earth. My wife, you must know, is a charming woman; and, sir, you have heard men speak of their daughters, but let me tell you that my daughter Louise is the most beautiful creature now living. And smart! She can read Latin like Cicero, sir; and with it all she is sweet and simple. She is soon to be married to Page Branham, a lawyer and a mighty fine fellow. The old man and I were close friends and he and I fostered the match; but, I assure you, it was most agreeable on all sides. Captain, sah, I have quit poker. This may be news to you, but it is a fact. Next Sunday I am going to our old log church, and with my head on a white oak slab I am going to repent; but not so loud, sir, that my wife and daughter may hear me. They believe I am a Christian, and I am going to be if it takes—my last chip, sir."

The Colonel had not overdrawn the charm of his family, and I don't believe that an art gallery ever presented a more beautiful woman than his daughter Louise. Not only was she schooled in books, but she

could hemstitch frills on the piano, one of her achievements being a quick-step whistled by the Colonel down from the days of Dan Rice's circus.

In this old Southern home, mellowing into poetic decay, I could see that the master of the house was looked up to as a sort of saint, and I could well understand why he strove to hide from his family his one great weakness.

"It isn't that I desire, sir, to pose as a better

"Mr. Crenshaw," announced Louise. I heard the Colonel gasp.



man than I am," he stole occasion to say to me, "but because I don't want to hurt them. My daughter has charge of the singing and my wife conducts about all of our church work, and—Captain, sah, the white oak slab for me next Sunday. But in the meantime we'll go bass fishing, all of which leads up to repentance, the most repentant and at the same time one of the best beloved of the Apostles being a pretty good fisherman. I gather."

But on the following morning he made no stir toward going, and I wondered as to what could have gone amiss. At breakfast he was glum, his wife sighed, and I noticed that Louise bore evidence of not having slept. Surely at this late day they had not caught wind of his gaming. I knew that in his frankness he would tell me what had gone wrong and I waited till we were in the library; and then, without asking a question, I looked an inquiry.

"The devil has broken loose, sir."

"I hope they haven't found out—"

"The devil has broken loose, sir, and is cavorting up and down the land. I told you that my daughter and Page Branham were to be married soon. And now what does she do, sir, but to refuse to marry him! Went away on a visit, met a young gipe of no family, of course, fell in love with him—*love* with him, sir, when she has known Page all her life! And now she says to me, 'You made the engagement with Page, and you are the one to tell him that the marriage cannot be.' That's the position she puts me in, a daughter that I love better than my life; and my wife, sir, what does she do but to agree with Louise, though she has never set eyes on the interloper!

"But I haven't got to the jolt yet; the fly-up-the-creek will be here to-day to ask me for her hand—all this coming on me just at a time when I've got reformation by its very throat. I am gentle, sir, but do you know what I am going to do? I'll horse-whip that presumptuous scoundrel! I will, sir, if the good Lord lends me the strength.

"I know that when Louise sees him quail before me, her foolish romance will wither up and die. He will be here, I understand, about noon time, and he's

got to come right into this room, where we all shall be assembled, sir, and make his proposal. Don't say a word, sah!"

I did not say a word; I sat looking out over the green sweep of wooded pasture, toward the creek where the bass were ready to strike. The old man continued to talk of the virtue of Page Branham and of the vileness of the wretch whose name he did not even know. "Name!" he blazed forth. "Why, confound him, sir, he wouldn't know his name if he should meet it in the road. Name! He never had such a possession as a name. My daughter tried to tell me what he managed to call himself, but my ears refused to receive it. The drama is not dead, sir. You'll see a play here to-day that you'll remember."

It was of no use to counsel him, to offer a suggestion, and my only hope was that his wrath might burn up and that out of its ashes would come a saner course; but as noon drew near he seemed harder and more determined. His wife came in and sat down, almost tearful. I could hear Louise walking up and down the veranda. After a long time she came to the door and said, "Father, Mr. Crenshaw is here."

The old man arose in rage. "Tell the scoundrel to come in here."

"He is not a scoundrel, sir."

"Tell him, whoever and whatever he is, to come in *here*!"

I did not wish to look upon the first shock of the encounter, and I stood with bowed head. "Mr. Crenshaw," announced Louise. I heard the Colonel gasp, and I looked up. And there stood "Ice-water Johnny!" It would be impossible to give even a notion of the Colonel's action, of his broken mutterings, his winking and ducking. "Why, Captain, sah," he cried out, "here is our old—I mean here is a gentleman, sir. Mr. Crenshaw, I am delighted to welcome you to my house."

We shook hands with Mr. Crenshaw, the Colonel winking him into silence; and about the old fellow the girl threw her grateful arms and cryingly laughed. "You dear old daddy! I knew you would like him."

"Like him!" declared the Colonel, "Tickled to death with him!"



The MAN and the MOMENT

By Elinor Glyn

Author of "The Reason Why," "Three Weeks," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. F. JAMES

Résumé of the Opening Installment: Michael Howard Aranstoun finds himself really enmeshed in his latest "affair"—with a Mrs. Hatfield. Now her husband is dying and she is determined to marry Michael as soon as Hatfield dies. Michael almost decides to marry old Bessie, his gatekeeper, to avoid the siren, when Sabine Delberg, a young American girl, bursts into his apartment in the castle. She has come with an uncle and aunt and Mr. Greenbank, whom they insist on her marrying, to view the parts of the castle open to the public; and has strayed into the secret passage leading to Michael's rooms to escape Greenbank's kisses. It develops that she cannot inherit the fortune left by her father until she is married or until she is twenty-one. Michael suggests a way out of the dilemma that is facing each of them: they are to marry, separate the same night, and never meet again. She agrees, and the ceremony is performed. This is over the protest of Michael's friend and guest, Henry Fordyce, who leaves the castle without seeing the bride. Sabine is impatient to get away to London to draw her fortune, and go to Paris to meet her school-girl friend, Moravia Cloudwater, who married Prince Torniloni. Sabine proposes to take the name "Mrs. Howard." Michael serves a wedding supper in his room, and is overcome by his bride's bewitching beauty. He gathers her in his arms and declares she must never leave him. The scene now shifts to Carlsbad, five years later.

MR. ELIAS CLOUDWATER came up the steps of the Savoy Hotel at Carlsbad, and called to the Arab who was waiting about.

"Has the Princess come in from her drive as yet?"

He was informed that she had not, and he sat down on the veranda to wait. He was both an American gentleman and an American father; therefore he was accustomed to waiting for his women folk and did not fidget. He read the New York *Herald*, observing

casually that, among others who were expected at the Bohemian health resort that day, was Lord Fordyce.

Presently, a tall, slender young woman came down the path through the woods, and leisurely entered the gate. Mr. Cloudwater watched her, and a kindly smile lighted his face. He thought how pretty she was, and how glad he was that she had joined Moravia and himself again this summer. The months when she went off by herself to her house in Brittany always seemed very long. He saw her coming from far enough to be able to take in every detail about her. Extreme slenderness and extreme grace were her distinctive marks. The face was childish and rounded in outline, but when you looked into the violet eyes there was some shadow of a story hidden there. She was about twenty-two years old, and was certainly not at Carlsbad for any reasons of cure, for her glowing complexion told of radiant health.

Her white clothes were absolutely perfect in their simplicity, and so was her air of unconcern and indifference. "The enigma," her friends often called her: She seemed so frank and simple, yet no one ever got beyond the wall of what she was really thinking; what did she do with her life? It seemed ridiculous that anyone so rich and attractive and young should care to pass long periods of time at a wild spot near Finisterre, in an old chateau perched upon the rocks, completely alone but for an elderly female companion.

There was, of course, some hidden tragedy about her husband, who was a raging lunatic or an inebriate shut up somewhere—perhaps there! They had had to part at once—he had gone mad on the wedding journey, some said. No one knew anything for a fact, only that when she did come into the civilized world, it was always with the Princess Torniloni and the Princess' father, who, if they knew the truth of Mrs. Howard's story, never gave it away. Men swarmed round her, but she appeared completely unconcerned and friendly with them all.

"I have had such an enchanting walk, Cloudy, dear," the slim young woman said, as she sat down in a basket chair near Mr. Cloudwater. "I am so glad we

came here, aren't you—and I am sure it will do Moravia no end of good. She passed me as I was coming from the Aberg on her way to Hans Heiling, so she will not be in yet; let us have tea."

The Arab called the waiter, who brought it to them. One or two other little groups were having tea too, but Mr. Cloudwater's party was singularly ungregarious; its members avoided making acquaintances in hotels. He and Mrs. Howard chatted alone over their tea for about half an hour. Presently there was the noise of a motor arriving. It whirled into the gate and stopped a little at one side. It was very dusty and travel-stained, and beside the chauffeur there got out a tall, fair Englishman. The personnel of the hotel came forward to meet him with *empressement*, and as he passed where Mr. Cloudwater and Mrs. Howard were sitting, they heard him say:

"My servant brought the luggage by train this morning, so I suppose the rooms are ready."

"They are a wonderful race," Mr. Cloudwater remarked, "aren't they, Sabine. I never can understand why you should so persistently avoid them—they really have much more in common with ourselves than Latins."

"That is why, perhaps—one likes contrasts—and French and Russians, or even Germans, are far more intelligent. Everyone to his taste!" And Mrs. Howard smiled.

The Englishman came out again in a few minutes, and sitting down lazily, as if he were alone upon the balcony terrace, he ordered some tea. Not the remotest scrap of interest in his surroundings lighted up his face. He might have been forty or forty-two, and had a peculiar distiction of his own.

"That is what I object to about them," Mrs. Howard remarked presently, "—their abominable arrogance. Look at that man. It is just as if there were no one else on this balcony but himself—no one else exists for him!"

"Why, Sabine, you are severe! He looks to me to be a pretty considerably nice man—and he is only reading the paper, as I have been doing myself," Mr. Cloudwater rejoined. "Perhaps he is the

English nobleman who, I hear, was expected to-day—Lord Fordyce, the paper said—and wasn't that the name of rather a prominent English politician, who had to go into the Upper House last year when his father died—and it was considered he would be a loss to the Commons?"

"I really don't know. I don't take the slightest interest in them or their politics— Ah! here is Moravia." And both rose to meet a very charming lady, who drove up in a victoria.

She had all the perfection of detail which characterizes the best-dressed American woman; and she had every attraction except, perhaps, a voice, but even that she knew how to modulate and disguise, so it was no wonder the Princess Torniloni passed for one of the most beautiful women in Rome or Paris, or Cairo or New York, whenever she graced any of the cities with her presence. She was a widow, too, and very rich. The prince, her husband, had been dead for nearly two years, and she was wearing grays and whites and mauves.

He had been a brute, too, but unlike her friend Mrs. Howard's husband, he had had the good taste to be killed riding in a steeplechase, and so all went well, and the pretty Princess was free to wander the world over with her indulgent father.

"It is just too lovely for words up in those woods, Papa," she said, "and I have had my tea in a dear little chalet restaurant. You did not wait for me, I hope?"

She sat down in a comfortable chair. Her arrival caused a flutter among the other occupants of the terrace, and even the Englishman glanced up. This group had at last made some impression, it would seem, upon the retina of his eye, for he looked deliberately at them, and realized that the two women were quite worthy of his scrutiny.

"But I hate Americans," he said to himself. "They are such actrèsses; you never know where you are with them—these two, though, appear some of the best."

Presently they went into the hotel, passing close by him, and for a second his eyes met the violet ones of Sabine

Howard. He was conscious that he felt distinctly interested—much to his disgust.

But, after all, he was here for a cure and a rest, and he had always believed in women as recreations.

His solitary table was near theirs in the restaurant. Later, he wrote to his friend Michael Arranstoun, loitering at Ostend:

The hotel is quite decent—and after your long sojourn in the wilds, you will have an overdose of polo and expensive ladies and baccarat. You had much better join me here at the end of the week. There are two pretty women who would be quite your affair. They have the next table, and neither of them can be taking the cure.

But Mr. Arranstoun, when he received this missive, had other things to do. He had been out of England, and indeed Europe, for nearly five years—having, in the summer of 1907, joined with a friend to explore the innermost borders of China and Tibet, and from there the passion for this kind of thing had overtaken him, and his own home knew him no more.

Now, however, he had announced that he had returned for good, and intended to spend the rest of his days at Arranstoun as a model landlord.

He started this by playing polo at Ostend, where he had run across Henry Fordyce. They had grasped each other's hands cordially, their estrangement forgotten when face to face; and the only mention there had been of the circumstances which had caused their parting was in a few sentences.

"By Jove, Henry, it is five whole years since you thundered morals at me, and shook the dust of Arranstoun from your feet!"

"You did behave abominably, Michael—but I am awfully glad to see you—and the scene at Ebbsworth, when Violet Hatfield read in *The Scotsman* the notice of your marriage, made me feel you had been almost justified in taking any course you could to make yourself safe. But how about your wife? Have you ever seen her again?"

"No. My lawyer tells me I can divorce



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"I hate Americans," he said to



caused a flutter among the other occupants of the terrace, and even the Englishman glanced up. "But himself. "They are such actresses."

her now for desertion. I should have to make some pretence of asking her to return to me, he says, which of course she would refuse to do—and then both can be free; but, for my part, I am not hankering after freedom much—I do very well as I am—and I always cherish a rather tender recollection of her.”

Henry laughed.

“I have often pictured that wedding,” he said, “and the little bride going off with her certificate and your name all alone. No family turned up awkwardly at the last moment to mar things; she left safely after the ceremony, eh?”

Michael looked away suddenly, and then answered with overdone unconcern:

“Yes—soon after the ceremony.”

“I do wonder you had no curiosity to investigate her character further!”

“I had—but she did not appreciate my interest—and—after she had gone—I was rather in a bad temper, and I reasoned myself into believing she was probably right; also just then I wanted to join Latimer Berkeley’s expedition to China. I remember his letter about it came by the next morning’s post, so I went; but do you know, Henry, I believe that little girl made some lasting impression upon me. I believe, if she had stayed, I should have been frantically in love with her—but she went, so there it is!”

“Why don’t you try to find her?” Henry asked.

“Perhaps I mean to, some day. I have thought of doing so often, but first China, and then one thing and another have stopped me—besides, she may have fancied some other fellow by this time—the whole thing was one of those colossal mistakes. If we could only have met ordinarily—and not married in a hurry and then parted—like that.”

“Has it never struck you she was rather young to be left to drift by herself?”

“Yes, often.” Then Michael grew a little constrained. “I believe I behaved like the most impossible brute, Henry—in marrying her at all, as you said—but I would like to make it up to her some day, and I suppose if, by chance, she has taken a fancy to some one else by this time and wants to be free of me, I

ought to divorce her—but, by Heaven, I believe I should hate that!”

“You dog in the manger!”

“Yes, I am—”

And so the subject had ended.

And now Henry, third Lord Fordyce, was taking a mild cure at Carlsbad, and had decided that in his leisure moments he would begin to write a book—a project which had long simmered in his brain; but after two days of sitting by the American party at each meal, a very strong desire to talk with them—especially the one with the strange violet eyes—overcame him; and with deliberate intention he scraped acquaintance with Mr. Cloudwater in the exercise room of the Kaiserbad, and Mr. Cloudwater, with polite ceremony, presented him that evening to his daughter and her friend.

Sabine had been particularly silent and irritating, Moravia thought, and as they went up to bed she scolded her about it.

“He is a perfect darling, Sabine,” she declared. “He is so lazy and English and phlegmatic—I’d like to make him move around with love, but he looked at you, you little witch, not at me at all.”

“You are welcome to him, Morri—I don’t care for Englishmen. Good-night, pet.” Mrs. Howard kissed her friend, and went on into her room.

CHAPTER VI



MORE than a week went by, and it seemed quite natural now to Lord Fordyce to shape his days according to the plans of the American party, and when they met at the Schlossbrunn in the morning at half-past seven, and he and Mr. Cloudwater and the Princess had drunk their tumblers of water together, their custom was to go on down to the town, and there to find Sabine, who had bought their slices of ham and their rolls, and awaited them at the end of the Alte Weise with the

pink paper bags; and then the four proceeded to walk to the Kaiser Park to breakfast.

This meal was so merry, Mrs. Howard tantalizing the others by having cream in her coffee, and sugar on her wild strawberries, while they were only permitted to take theirs "plain."

During the stroll there, it was Sabine's custom persistently to adhere to the side of Mr. Cloudwater, leaving the other two tête-à-tête—and, delightful as Lord Fordyce found the Princess, this irritated him. He discovered himself, as the days advanced, to be experiencing a distinct longing to know what was passing in that little head, whose violet eyes looked out with so much mystery and shadow in their depths. He could not tell himself that she avoided him; she was always friendly and casual and perfectly at her ease; but no extra look of pleasure or welcome for him personally ever came into her face, and never once had he been able to speak to her really alone.

Mr. Cloudwater and the two ladies drove back from breakfast each day, and he was left to take his exercises and his bath. Now and then he had encountered the Princess in the near woods just before luncheon, returning from the Kaiserbad, but Mrs. Howard, never; and when he inquired how she spent her time, she replied, "However I happen to fancy," which gave him no clue as to where he might find her. And with all her frank charm, she was not a person to whom it was easy to put a direct question.

Lord Fordyce began to grow too interested for his peace of mind. When he realized this, he got very angry with himself, for he had never permitted a woman to be anything but a mild recreation in his life.

Fate was kind one Saturday morning, and allowed Lord Fordyce to chance upon Mrs. Howard right up at the Belvedere in the far woods, looking over the valley. She was quite alone, and her slender figure was outlined against the bright sunlight, as she leaned on the balustrade gazing down at the exquisite scene.

Henry could have cried aloud in joy

"At last!" but he restrained himself, and instead only said a casual "Hullo!"

Sabine turned and looked at him, and answered his greeting with frank cordiality.

"Have you never been there before? I think it is one of the most lovely spots in the whole woods, and at this time there is never anyone—what made you penetrate so far?"

"Good fortune! The jade has been unkind until now."

They leaned on the balustrade together.

"I always like being up on a high mountain and looking down at things—don't you?" she said.

"No, not always—one feels lonely—but it is nice if one is with a suitable companion. How have you, at your age, managed to become self-sufficing?"

"Circumstance, I expect, has taught me the beauty of solitude. I spend months alone in Brittany."

"And what do you do—read, most of the time?"

"Yes, a great deal. You see, Moravia and I were at a convent together, and there, beyond teaching us to spell and to write and to do a few sums and to learn a garbled version of French history, a little music, and a great deal of embroidery, they left us totally ignorant. One must try to supply the deficiencies oneself. It is appalling to remain ignorant, once one realizes that one is."

"Knowledge on any subject is interesting. Did you begin generally, or did you specialize?"

"I always wanted to be just—and to understand things. The whole of life and existence seemed too difficult. I think I began trying to find some key to that, and this opened the door to general information, and so eventually, perhaps, one specializes."

He was wise enough not to press the question. He adored subtleties, and he noted with delight that she was not so completely indifferent as usual.

"I like thinking of things too—and trying to discover their meanings and what caused them. We are all, of course, the victims of heredity."

"That may be," she agreed, "but the will can control any heredity. It can only

manifest itself when we let ourselves drift. The tragedy of it is that we have drifted too far, sometimes, before we learn that we could have directed the course, if we had willed. Ignorance, seemingly, is the most cruel foe we have to encounter, because we are so defenseless, not knowing he is there."

She sighed unconsciously. Lord For-dyce was moved. She was prettier and sweeter than he had ever fancied she would be, could he ever contrive to find her all alone. He watched her covertly; the exquisite peachy skin with its pure color, and her soft brown hair dressed with a simplicity which he thought perfection, all appealed to him, and those strange violet eyes, rather round and heavily lashed with brown-shaded lashes, darker at the tips.

She went on presently, not remarking his silence.

"It is heredity which makes my countrywomen so nervous and unstable, as a rule. You don't like them, as I know." She smiled. "And I think, from your point of view, you are right. You see, we are nearly all mushroom growths sprung up in a night—and we have not had time for poise, or the acceptance with calmness of our good fortune. We are as yet unbalanced by it, and don't know what we want."

"You are very charming." And he looked truthful.

"Yes, I know—we can be more charming than any other women, because we have learned from all the other nations and play whichever part we wish to select."

"Yes," he admitted, rather too quickly—and her rippling laugh rang out. He had hardly ever heard her laugh, and it enchanted him, even though he was nettled at her understanding of his thought.

"It remains for men to make us desire to play the same part always—if they find it agreeable."

Again he said, "Yes,"—but this time slowly.

"Now you Englishmen have the heredity of absolute stolidity to fight. While we ought to be trying to counteract jumping from one rôle to another, you ought to try to teach yourselves that versatility is a good thing, too, in its way."

"I am sure it is. I wish you would teach me to understand it; but you yourself seem to be restful and stable. How have you achieved this?"

"By studying the meaning of things, I suppose, and checking myself every time I began to want to do the restless things I saw my countrywomen doing. We have wonderful wills, you know; and if we want sufficiently, we can get anything. That is why Moravia says we make such successful great ladies in the different countries into which we marry. Your great ladies, if they are nice, are great naturally, and if they are not, they often fail even if they are born aristocrats. We do not often fail, because we know very well we are taking on a part, and must play it to the very best of our ability all the time—and gradually we play it better than if it were natural."

"What a little cynic!"

"I am not at all a cynic! It is the truth I am telling you. I admire and respect our methods far more than yours, which just 'growed,' like *Toxsy*."

"But cynicism and truth are, unfortunately, synonymous. Only you are too young, and ought not to know anything about either."

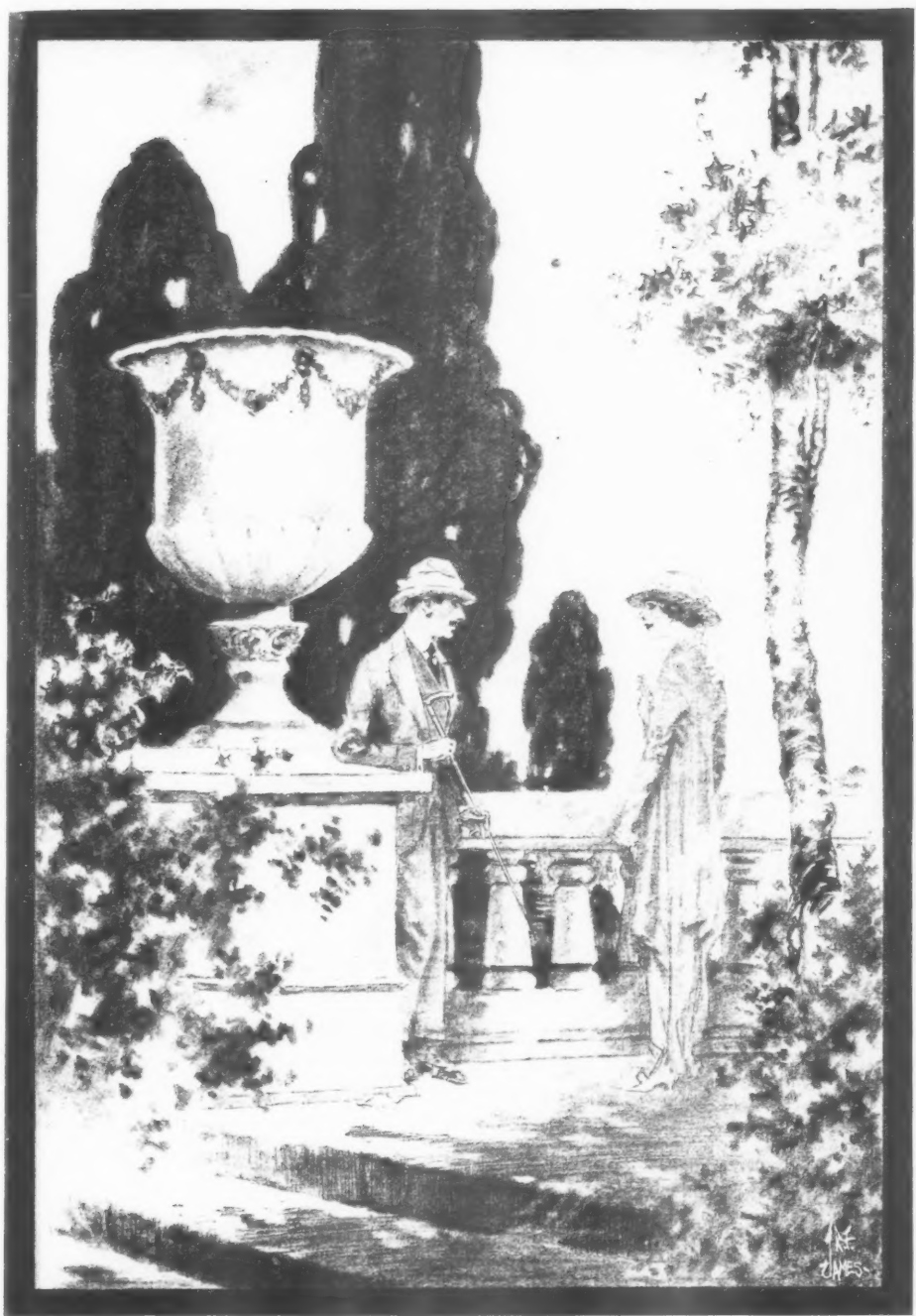
"I like to know and do things I ought not to." Her eyes were merry.

"Tell me more about your countrywomen. I'm awfully interested, and have always been too frightened of their brilliancy to investigate, myself."

"We are not nearly so bothered with hearts as Europeans—heredity again. Our mothers and fathers generally sprang from people working too hard to have great emotions—then we arrive and have every luxury poured upon us from birth; and if we have hardy characters, we weather the deluge and remain very decent citizens."

"And if you have not?"

"Why, naturally the instincts for hard work, which made our parents succeed, if they remain idle must make some explosion. So we grow restless in our palaces, and get fads and nerves and quaint diseases—and have to come to Carlsbad—and talk to sober Englishmen!" The look of mischief which she vouchsafed him was perfectly adorable—he was duly affected.



"You are very charming!" And he looked truthful. "Yes, I know—we can be more charming than any other women, because we have learned from all the other nations and play whichever part we wish to select."

"You take us as a sort of cure!"

"Yes—!"

"How do you know so much about us and our faults? I gathered, from what you said last night at dinner, that you have never been in England, except once for a month when you were almost a child."

"The rarest specimens come abroad,"—a dimple showed in her left cheek—"and I read about you in your best novels—even your authors unconsciously give you away, and show your selfishness and arrogance and self-satisfaction."

"Shocking brutes, aren't we?"

"Perfectly."

Then they both laughed, and Sabine suggested it was quite time they returned to luncheon. So they turned and sauntered downwards through the lovely green woods, with the warm hum of insects and the soft glancing summer sunshine. And all of you who know the beauties of Carlsbad, or indeed any other of those Bohemian spas, can just picture how agreeable was their walk, and how conducive to amiable discussion and the acceleration of friendship. Henry tried to get her to tell him some more of the secrets of her countrywomen, but she would not be serious. She was in a merry mood, and turned the fire into the enemy's camp, making him disclose the ways of Englishmen.

"I believe you like us as a rule, because we are such casual creatures—brutes!" he said at last,—"rather indifferent to our *petits soins*, and apt to seize what we desire or take it for granted."

A sudden shadow came into her face which puzzled him, and she did not answer, but went on to talk of Brittany and the place which she had bought, "Héronac," a weird castle perched on a rock above a fishing village, with the sea dashing at its base, and the spray rising right to her sitting-room windows.

"I have to go across a causeway to my garden on the mainland—and when it is very rough, I get soaking wet; it is the wildest place you ever saw."

"What on earth made you select it?"

Lord Fordyce asked. "You, who look like a fresh rose, to choose a grim brig-and's stronghold as a residence!"

"It suited my mood on the day I first saw it—and I bought it the following week. I make up my mind in a minute."

"You must let me motor past and look at it," he pleaded. "When my twenty-one days of drinking this uninteresting water is up, I intend going back in my car to Paris, and from there down to see Mont St. Michel."

"You shall not only look at it—you may even come in—if you are nice and do not bore me between this and then." And she glanced up at him slyly. "I have an old companion, Madame Imogen Aubert—who lives with me there—and she always hopes I shall one day have visitors. I shall be there towards the middle of August. After we leave here, the Princess and dear Clowdie go to Italy with her little son, the baby Torniloni; he is such a darling, nearly three years old—he is at Héronac now with his nurses."

"And you go back to Brittany alone?"

"Yes—"

"Then I shall come too."

"If, at the end of your cure, you have not bored me."

By this time they had got down to the Savoy gate—and there found Moravia and Mr. Cloudwater waiting for them on the balcony—clamoring for lunch.

Princess Torniloni gave a swift, keen glance at the two who had entered, but she did not express the thought which came to her:

"It is rather hard that Sabine, who does not want him and is not free to have him, should have drawn him instead of me."

That night in the restaurant, there joined their party one of those American men who are always to be met with in Paris or Aix or Carlsbad or Monte Carlo, at whatever in any of those places represents the Ritz Hotel; one who knew everybody and everything, a person of no particular sex, but who always would make a party go with his stories and his gaiety, and help along any hostess. Cranley Beaton was this one's name. The Cloudwater party were all quite glad to welcome him and hear news of their friends. Other friends also had arrived, and Moravia rejoiced. Sabine hated the avalanche of dinners and lunches this would mean.

"You do remain so young, Morri," she said, as they linked arms going up to bed. "You used to be the mother to all of us at St. Anne's—and now I am the mother of us two!"

"You are an old, wise-headed Sibyl—that is what you are, darling!" the Princess returned. "I wish I could ever know what has so utterly changed you from our Convent days." And she sighed impatiently. "Then you were the merriest madcap, ready to tease anyone, and to have any lark, and for nearly these four years since we have been together again, you have been another person—grave and self-possessed. What are you always thinking of, Sabine?"

They had reached their sitting-room, and Mrs. Howard went to the window and opened it wide.

"I grew up in one year, Moravia; I grew a hundred years old, and all the studies which I indulge in at Héronac teach me that peace and poise are the things at which to aim. I cannot tell you any more."

"I did not mean to probe into your secrets, darling," the Princess exclaimed hastily. "I promised you I never would when you came to me that November in Rome. We were both miserable enough, goodness knows! We made the bargain that there should be no retrospects. And your angelic goodness to me all that time when my little Girolamo was born, has made me your eternal debtor. Why, but for you, darling, he might have been snatched from me by the hateful Torniloni family!"

Meantime, in the smoking-room a conversation was going on between Cranley Beaton and Lord Fordyce. The latter, with great skill, had begun to elicit certain information he desired from this society register.

"Yes, indeed," Mr. Beaton was saying. "She is a peach. The husband?" And he looked extremely wise. "Oh! she made some frightful mésalliance out West, and they say he's shut in a madhouse or home for inebriates. Her entrance among us dates from when she first appeared in Paris, about three years ago, with Princess Torniloni. She is awfully rich and awfully good, and it is a real pity she

does not divorce the ruffian and begin again!"

"She is not free, then?" And Lord Fordyce felt his heart sink. "I thought, probably, she had got rid of any encumbrance, as it is fairly easy over with you."

"Why, she could in a moment if she wanted to, I expect," Mr. Beaton assured his listener. "She hasn't fancied anyone else yet; when she does, she will, no doubt."

"Her husband is an American, then?"

"Why, of course—didn't I tell you she came from the West? Why, I remember crossing with her. She was in deep mourning—in the summer of 1908. She never spoke to anyone on board, and it was about eighteen months after that I was presented to her in Paris. She gets prettier every day."

Lord Fordyce felt that this was true.

"So she could be free if she fancied anyone, you think?" he hazarded casually, as if his interest in the subject had waned—and when Mr. Beaton had answered, "Yes—rather," he got up and sauntered off towards bed.

CHAPTER VII



FTER this, for several days

Mrs. Howard made it rather difficult for Lord Fordyce to speak to her alone, although he saw her every day, and each hour grew more enamored. She, for her part, was certainly growing to like him. He soothed her; his intelligence was highly trained, and he was courteous and gentle and sympathetic—but for some reason which she could not explain, she had no wish to precipitate matters. Her mind was quite without any definite desire of determination, but, being a woman, she was perfectly aware that Henry was falling in love with her. A number of other men had done so before, and had then at once begun to be uninteresting in her eyes. It was as if she were numb to the attraction of men—but this one had qualities which appealed to her. Her own coun-

trymen were never cultivated enough in literature, and were too absorbed in stocks and shares to be able to take flights of sentiment and imagination with her. Lord Fordyce understood in a second—and they could discuss any subject with a refined subtlety which enchanted her.

Henry had not spent his life manœuvring love affairs with women, and was not very clever at manipulating circumstance. He fretted and fumed at not getting his desired tête-à-tête, but with all the will was too hedged in by conventionality and a sense of politeness to force matters, as his friend, Michael Arranstoun, would have done with high-handed unconcern. Thus, his cure at Carlsbad was drawing to a close before he again spent an afternoon quite alone with Sabine Howard. They had gone to the Aberg to tea, and the Princess had been too tired to walk back, and had got into the waiting carriage, making Cranley Beaton accompany her. She was not in a perfectly amiable temper. Lord Fordyce attracted her strongly, and it was plain to be seen he had eyes but for Sabine—who cared for him not at all. The Princess found Cranley Beaton absolutely tiresome—"No better than the New York *Herald*," she thought pettishly, "or the Continental *Daily Mail*." The waters were getting on her nerves, too; she would be glad to leave and go to Sorrento with that cupid among infants, Girolamo. Sabine had better divorce her horror of a husband, and marry the man and have done with it!

Now the walk from the Aberg down through the woods is a peculiarly delightful one, and, even in "the season" at Carlsbad, it is not over-crowded. Henry Fordyce felt duly elated at the prospect, and Mrs. Howard had an air of pensive mischief in her violet eyes. Lord Fordyce, who had been accustomed for years to making speeches for his party, and was known as a ready orator, found himself rather silent, and even a little nervous, for the first hundred yards or so. She looked so bewitching, he thought, in her fresh white linen, showing up the round peachiness of her young cheeks, and those curling, childish brown lashes making their shadow. He was overcome

with a desire to kiss her. She was so supremely healthy and delectable. He felt he had been altogether a fool in his estimate of the serious necessities of life hitherto. Woman was now one of them—and this woman supremely so. Why, if she could be freed from bonds, should she not become his wife? But he felt it might be wiser not to be too precipitate about suggesting the thing too her. She had certainly given him no indication that she would receive the idea favorably, and appeared to be of the type of character which could not be coerced. He felt very glad Michael Arranstoun had not responded to his pressing request to join him. It would be far better if that irritatingly attractive specimen of manhood should not step upon the scene, until he himself had some definite hope of affairs being satisfactorily settled.

They began their talk upon the lightest subjects, and gradually drifted into one of the discussions of emotions in the abstract which are so fascinating—and so dangerous—and which require skill to direct and continue.

Mrs. Howard held that pleasure could alone come from harmony of body and spirit, while Lord Fordyce maintained that wild discords could also produce it, and that it could not be defined as governed by any law.

"One is sometimes full of pleasure even against one's will," he said. "Every spiritual principle and conviction may be outraged, and yet for some unaccountable reason pleasure remains."

Mrs. Howard opened her eyes wide as if at a sudden thought.

"Yes," she said. "I wish what you say were not true, but it is—and it is a great injustice."

"What makes you say that?" Henry asked, quickly. "You were thinking of some particular thing. Do tell me."

"I was thinking how some people can sin and err in every way, and yet there is something about them which causes them to be forgiven, and which even causes pleasure while they are sinning; and there are others who might do the same things and would be anathematized at once—and no joy felt with them at any time. Moravia and I call it having 'it'—some people have it, and some

people have not, and that is the end of the matter!"

"It is a strange thing, but I know what you mean. I know one particular case of it in a friend of mine. No matter what he does, one always forgives him. It does not depend upon looks, either—although this actual person is abominably good-looking; it does not depend upon intelligence or character or—anything; as you say, it is just 'it.' Now you have it, and the Princess, perfectly charming though she is, has not."

Sabine did not contradict him; she never was conventional, denying truths for the sake of diffidence or politeness. Moravia was beautiful and charming, but it was true she had not "it."

"I think it applies more to men than to women," was all she said.

"You were thinking of a man, then, when you spoke?"

"Yes—I was thinking of a man—but it is not an interesting subject."

Lord For-dyce decided that it was, but he did not continue the line of thought.

"I want you to tell me all about Héronac," he requested, "and what charmed you in it enough to make you buy it suddenly like that. How did you come upon it?"

"I had just arrived from America, at the end of the July of 1908—four years ago—and I found, when I got to Cherbourg, that I could not join my friend, the Princess, as I had intended, because

her husband had taken her off to his country place near Naples. So I hired a motor and wandered down into Brittany alone. I wanted to be alone. I was motor-ing along, when a violent storm came on, furious rain and wind, and just at the worst and weirdest moment, I passed Héronac, which is a few hundred yards from the edge of the present village. It

stands out in the sea on

a great spur of rock, entirely separated from the mainland by a deep chasm about thirty feet wide, over which there was then a broken bridge which had once been a drawbridge. It was a huge, grim ruin with only a few

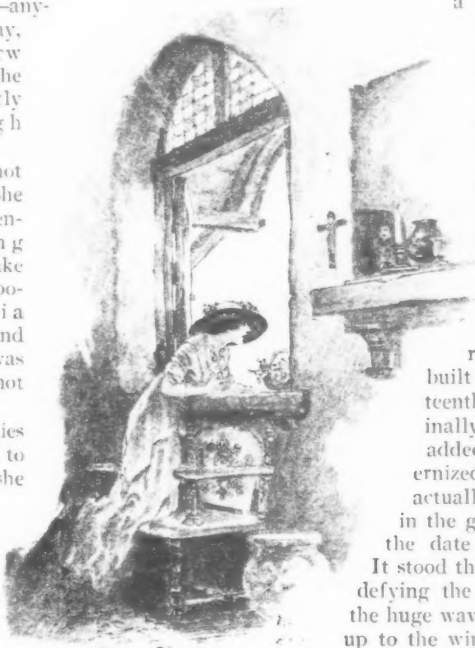
roofed rooms, built about the thirteenth century originally, and of course added to and modernized. The house actually standing within the great towers is of the date of Louis XIV.

It stood there, a dark mass, defying the storm, although the huge waves splashed right up to the windows."

"It sounds repellent."

"It was—fierce and grim and repellent, and it suited my mood—so I stopped at the Inn, my old maid Simone and I—and I got permission to go and see it.

The landlord of the Inn had the keys. The last of the Héronacs drank himself to death with absinthe in Paris, so the place was closed, and was no doubt for sale. *'Mais, oui.'* he told us. Simone was terrified to cross the wretched bridge, with the water swirling beneath, and we left her to go back to the Inn, while the landlord's son came with me. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon, and was a most extraordinary day, for now it began to thunder and lighten."



She was watching from the window
... her knees gave way beneath
her ... for the voice was the
voice of Michael Arranstoun.

"I wonder you were not afraid."

"I am never afraid—I tell you, it suited me. There was still some furniture in the roofed part of the inner court, and in the two great towers which flank the main building, but the view from the windows when we crept along to them across the broken floor was superb, straight out to the ocean, the waves thundering at the base. I made up my mind that night I would buy it if I could—and, as I told you before, I did so in the following week."

"How quaint of you."

"It has been the greatest delight to me, and, as you will see, I have done something with it. I restored the center, and have made its arrangements modern and comfortable, but have left that one huge room on the first floor as it was, only with the roof mended. I spend hours and hours in the deep window embrasures looking right over the sea. It has taught me more of the meaning of things than all my books."

"You speak as if you were an old woman," Lord Fordyce exclaimed, "and you look only a mere child now—then, when you bought this brigand's stronghold, you must have been in the nursery!"

"I was over eighteen!"

"A colossal age! It was simply ridiculous for you to be wanting dark castles and solitude. What—?" And then he paused; he did not continue his question.

"I was really very old—I had been old for almost a year."

"And do you mean to remain old always, or will you ever let anyone teach you to be young?"

Sabine looked away into the somber fir trees. They had got to a part of the path where the woods on either side are black as night in their depths.

"I—don't—know," she said, very low.

Lord Fordyce moved nearer to her.

"I wish you would let me try to take away all those somber thoughts I see sometimes in those sweet eyes."

"How would you begin?"

"By loving you very much—and then by trying to make you love me."

"Does love take away dark thoughts, then—or does it bring them?"

"That depends upon the love," he told her, eagerly. "When it is great enough to be unselfish, it must bring peace and happiness, surely—"

"They are good things—they are harmony—but—"

"Yes—what are the buts?" His voice trembled a little.

"Love seems to me to be a wild thing, a raging, tearing passion. Can it ever be just tender and kind?"

"I wish you would let me prove to you that it can."

She looked into his face gravely, and there was nothing but honest question in her violet eyes.

"To what end?" she asked.

"I would like you to marry me." He had said it now when he had not intended to yet, and he was pale as death.

She shrank from him a little.

"But surely you know that I am not free!"

"I hoped—I believed that you can make yourself so—if you knew how I love you! I have never really loved any woman before. I always thought they should be only recreations; but the moment I saw you, my whole opinions changed."

She grew troubled.

"I wish you had not said this to me," she faltered. "I—do not know that I wish to change my life. I could, of course, be free, I suppose—if I wanted to be—but—I am not sure. What would it mean if I listened to you? Tell me. I am sometimes lonely—and I like you."

"I want to make you feel more than that, but I will be content with whatever you will give me. I do not care one atom what dark page is in your past. I know it can have been nothing of your own fault, and if it were, I should not care—I only care for you, Sabine—will you not tell me that you will try to let me make you happy? It would mean that—that I should devote my life to making you happy."

"A woman should be contented with that, surely," she said. And if Henry Fordyce had had his usual critical wits about him unclouded by love, he would have smiled his cynical smile and have said to himself:

(Continued on page 1036 of this issue.)

Sixty-Six Hundred Cubic Feet of Snow

BY
ELLIOTT
FLOWER

A SIMPLE sum in arithmetic will show that I have about six thousand, six hundred cubic feet of snow to handle every winter. It's a very simple sum, but it made a lot of trouble for me. I can see now that I'd have been much better off if I hadn't bothered with it at all—that is, if I had just shoveled snow without thinking.

I also have about thirteen thousand square feet of lawn to look after during the summer, but that need be mentioned only incidentally, for this is a snow story. Grass is more conservative than snow anyhow—not so irregular in its habits. You never wake up in the morning and find that the grass has come up so rapidly over night that you have got to cut your way to the street with a scythe, while snow may do any old thing when you're not watching.

Sixty-six hundred cubic feet of snow can provide a large assortment of back-aches for one unaccustomed to manual labor. I live on a corner, which accounts for the large supply of sidewalk. It is very nice to live on a corner—except in the snow-shoveling season. A corner house gives a man a feeling of importance that he can get in almost no other way. Peter Coleman, who lives next to me, is not the prominent citizen that I am, mainly because he does not live on a corner. His place is only half the size of mine, but that is inconsequential; it is the corner location that counts.



ILLUSTRATED BY HERB ROTH

I did not reason this out when I got the house, but I was conscious of a feeling of satisfaction in getting it, for I somehow felt that I should be treated with more deference by friends and acquaintances because of it. What I did not foresee—or at least appreciate—was that I should become responsible for the removal of six thousand, six hundred cubic feet of snow every winter.

It is a pretty big place, you see—one hundred by one hundred and fifty feet. That gives me two hundred and fifty feet of sidewalk, and this sidewalk is four feet wide, so it comes to one thousand square feet. A thousand square feet of walk to be cleaned is bad enough, but even that does not show the magnitude of the undertaking, for the snow keeps falling at intervals all winter. I haven't consulted the Weather Bureau, which is too conservative to be satisfying in these matters, but my own guess is that where I live at least six feet of snow falls in the course of the winter, which would make six thousand cubic feet of snow to be removed from my two hundred and fifty feet of sidewalk. And even that is not all, for the walks leading to the house, both front and rear, add fifty feet



Watering your lawn with a traveling sprinkler is a diversion.

to the two hundred and fifty, and this, although these walks are only two feet wide, gives me an additional six hundred cubic feet of snow to handle.

The lawn problem, to which I had previously given some attention, presented larger figures, but it was nothing like as discouraging. My lot contains fifteen thousand square feet, of which approximately thirteen thousand square feet are lawn. That's a whole lot of ground over which to push a lawn-mower, but you have the satisfaction of knowing that the job is done when it is done and won't have to be done over again the next day. There is a comforting reliability about grass that is wholly lacking in snow; you can plan your grass-cutting with a calendar, but you can't plan your snow-shoveling that way. And watering your lawn with a traveling sprinkler is a diversion rather than a task. You keep wondering where the sprinkler will go next, and very likely, while you're not looking, it chases a lady off the sidewalk.

All this, as I say, I had figured out before, but the thirteen thousand square

feet of lawn did not begin to disturb me as the six thousand, six hundred cubic feet of snow did.

When I reached the latter total, while operating a one-man-power snow-shovel after the first fall of the beautiful, I paused to wonder how much of the winter's job I had then got out of the way. That's where a mathematical mind makes trouble for itself that an idle mind never knows.

However, I paused to wonder, and that naturally led me to figures. My estimate was that about six inches of snow had fallen, in which case my cleared walks represented the removal of five hundred and fifty cubic feet of snow. I felt as if I had handled about fifty-five thousand cubic feet, but I was determined to be conservative in the matter, so I resolutely put the snowfall at no more than six inches. The result was not very encouraging, for it left me with over six thousand cubic feet to be handled later; but the real discouragement came when the Weather Bureau reported the snowfall as five-tenths of an inch. As I have previously intimated, I never did have much use for the Weather Bureau, and I had even less after that.

Five-tenths of an inch!

That meant only a fraction over forty-five cubic yards removed—hardly enough to make a dent in the winter's total.

I flatter myself that I can be as conservative as any man ought to be, but this was conservatism gone crazy. I'd have paid real money for a chance to put a snow-shovel in the weather man's hands and turn him loose on my side-walks.

Five-tenths of an inch!

That so disgusted me that I quit right then and there. I could have stood out against the weather man, of course, by merely consigning him to the warm place, but my wife insisted upon accepting his figures, and that settled it.

I don't mean to say that I shoveled no more snow, for it is my recollection that I handled several tons of it during the winter, but I shoveled none that I could get anybody else to shovel. Unfortu-

nately, I had to rely upon men looking for odd jobs to do this work, and men looking for odd jobs are not as numerous when there is snow to be shoveled as they are when there is nothing to be done. At my place, there always seems to be a great demand for work when there is no work to do and a great scarcity of labor when it is needed. So I still did a good deal of snow-shoveling that winter.

The following winter, however, I had things in better shape—that is, I thought I had, but you never can tell where you stand until the returns are all in.

Joe, evidently surmising my trouble, decided that he would like to take charge of my sidewalks. Joe was already in charge of the lawn, but he explained that he had to live in winter as well as in summer and he couldn't find much to do in the grass-cutting line after the snow came.

"You understand, Joe," I warned him, "that the care of a lawn is one thing and the sidewalk game is something else again."

Joe said he understood.

"You have to cut the grass," I persisted, "only once in so often, so you can plan intelligently, but you can't tell when you may have to shovel snow. You may do the snow job to-day and then have to do it all over again to-morrow. Moreover, it's a job that can't be put off. It doesn't make much difference whether you cut the grass one day or the next, but a snow-covered walk demands instant attention."

Joe said he knew all that.

"All right," I agreed. "If you want the contract to keep my walks clear of snow this winter, you may have it—if you don't ask too much. What's your rate per cubic yard?"

Joe didn't know anything about cubic yards.

I explained that that was the business-like way of doing business, as any con-

tractor would tell him; that the cost of excavating was always based upon the number of cubic yards excavated, and this was merely a matter of snow excavation; but Joe, like most of his class, had no sort of a business head. He was more of a gambler than a business man anyway. He wanted a monthly wage for his work, which, as anyone can see, would be in effect taking a chance on the weather. If there wasn't much snow, he'd win; if there was a lot of snow, it would be a bargain for me.

This wasn't at all business-like, and it was especially displeasing to me because I like to reduce everything to a mathematical basis, but I had to let him have his way.

Then another disagreeable detail obtruded itself on my attention. Joe was a member of the Grass-Cutters' Union, but did that give him the right to shovel snow?

I recalled that when I engaged him to look after the lawn an agent of the Amalgamated Federation of Home Unions, which I understood included all unions of workers in or about residences and apartment houses, had appeared suddenly and asked to see his union card. That was how I learned that he was a member of the Grass-Cutters' Union.



Trouble began with the first snowfall.

"Suppose," I suggested to Joe at the time, "suppose you were not a union man. What then?"

"Why, then," he replied, "you'd have to discharge me or they'd call out the cook and the housemaid."

So it was with some trepidation that I now asked Joe if he was a member of the Snow-Shovelers' Union.

"There aint any," he answered. "It aint a steady enough thing for a union, so it's anybody's job."

"In that case," I decided, much relieved, "I'll engage you. It's up to you, therefore, to keep these walks clear of snow from now until the end of the winter, and you're to get on the job in a hurry every time it snows."

"Trust me!" promised Joe. "I'll be layin' for it."

That seemed to solve my problem, which was merely to get the work done without doing it myself, but, as Mr. Gilbert has wisely remarked, things are seldom what they seem.

I altogether forgot Mike, my furnace man. It would not have seemed to me a matter that concerned him anyway, but he had a different idea about that.

Trouble began with the first snowfall. Joe was on the job promptly. But Mike was on Joe just as promptly. I pried them apart with difficulty.

Mike looks after my furnace and does odd jobs about the house. He is a member of the Housemen's Union, and he vociferously asserted that snow-shoveling, whenever it became a regular job, was under the jurisdiction of his union. Joe quite as vigorously asserted that it was not.

"Anything in the house is yours," said Joe, "but don't come outside."

"Yours is a summer union," retorted Mike. "What right have you got butting in on winter work?"

It seemed to me that I ought to have something to say in the matter, but I learned very quickly that I didn't count.

"I engaged Joe for the work," I ventured, "and that ought to settle it."

"You wont think so when the Federation gets after you," threatened Mike.

"Can't I employ whom I please?" I demanded, although I really knew better than to ask such a silly question.

"I should say not," replied Mike.

I subsided then. "Do it half and half and split the money," I ventured weakly.

The suggestion was scornfully received by both.

"I'd be fined by the union for workin' with a man that has no right on the job," declared Mike.

"It 'ud be the end of me," asserted

"Better get busy with them sidewalks," advised the policeman.



Joe. "There'd never a self-respectin' grass-cutter give me even a pleasant look afterward."

"Oh, well, settle it between yourselves," I yielded, "but one or the other of you get to work on the job."

"Sure," agreed Joe. "I got it started already."

"Put that shovel to the snow once more," blustered Mike, "and I'll have Dan Kelly on your neck!"

"Don't you even be kickin' the snow away with your feet," retorted Joe, "or I'll have you up before the committee on discipline."

"Well?" I asked, when I thought they

had glowered at each other long enough.

"I'm too good a union man," said Joe, "to be riskin' trouble."

"Me too," declared Mike.

"But how about the snow?" I questioned anxiously.

"See Kelly," they advised.

"But that wont do!" I objected. "The walks have got to be cleaned."

"See Kelly," they insisted.

There being nothing else to do, I saw Kelly. I got him by telephone at the headquarters of the Amalgamated Federation of Home Unions, of which he was business agent, and he kindly consented to come over at once and adjust the matter.

Kelly was not at all the kind of a man I expected to see. I had heard a great deal of business agents, and I had always pictured them as big and blustering, while Kelly, in addition to being rather small, was mild and affable.

I stated the case briefly, and that I also stated it fairly would seem to be proved by the fact that neither Joe nor Mike made any correction.

"Joe got to it first," decided Kelly, "so it's his job."

"Not when there's a winter man," objected Mike. "It goes with the furnace job."

"That's so, too," agreed Kelly. "It's Mike's job."

"It would be his against any outsider," argued Joe, "but it goes to whoever gets it when there's two union men on the place."

Kelly evidently found the problem perplexing. "There's something to that," he admitted doubtfully. "I guess we better put it up to the Executive Council."

"But how about the snow?" I inquired anxiously.

"Oh, that'll be all right," Kelly assured me. "The one that has a right to the job will look after it."

"But that wont do!" I complained. "I want my walks opened now."

"I'm sorry," apologized Kelly. "It's too blame bad, of course, but this row raises a question of jurisdiction, and only the Executive Council can settle that."

"The pay I offer is all right, isn't it?" I demanded.

"Oh, yes, that's all right."

"And there's no violation of union principles anywhere?"

"None at all."

"And either man is willing to do the work?"

"Dead anxious."

"Yet I can't get it done," I grumbled.

"Here I am with the money—entirely blameless in the matter—ready to pay for the labor I want—and I have got to suffer for some fool disagreement to which I am no party at all!"

"It is too bad," condoled Kelly, "but there's a way you can get the work done if it's very important."

"How is that?"

"Why, I can release one of these men to do it, subject to the approval of the Executive Council."

"How will that operate?" I asked.

"Oh, it's a very simple arrangement," explained Kelly. "You employ whichever man you wish, and pay him for the work. If the Executive Council decides when it reaches the case that he is the man who should have done it, that's all there is to it; but if the Council decides that the other man should have had the job, then you've got to pay him too."

"Pay double!" I cried.

"Why, of course you've got to pay one man for doing the work," argued Kelly, "and pay the other for beating him out of a job, provided you don't guess right in picking your man."

"I'd have a fine chance to pick the right man," I retorted, "with the Council having the last say."

"Oh, well, suit yourself," returned Kelly indifferently.

"I will!" I declared. "I'll give up the whole idea and go back to the old plan of engaging any old tramp that happens along after a snow-fall."

"Oh, you can't do that now," asserted Kelly.

"I did it before," I contended, "and these fellows never even murmured."

"Of course not," returned Kelly. "It was only an occasional job for anybody then, but you made a regular job of it when you gave it to Joe, and that puts it under union control."

"What's the matter with my control?" I exclaimed irritably.

"Oh, you haven't any," was Kelly's placid reply.

"Well, I rather think I'll beat the Union out of it anyway!" I declared. "I'll not take either of your highbinders, but do the work myself."

"Yes, you might do that," conceded Kelly.

"There *is* something I can do, then?"

"Oh, yes."

"That's gratifying," I commented.

My sarcasm was lost on Kelly. "We don't mind who does the work," he explained, "so long as our man gets paid for it. And there'd probably be a fine against you for using non-union labor."

"Don't go so fast," I pleaded. "Let me understand this. I do the work, and still I have to pay for having it done, and then I'm fined for doing it."

"That's it," acknowledged Kelly, "but it's your own fault. You might have kept it the way it was, you know, but now it's a union job, and this question of jurisdiction has got to be settled before we can do anything."

I retired from the conference with Kelly in bewilderment and dismay, but I did not thereby escape trouble.

My wife wanted to know why I did not have the walks cleaned.

I tried to explain the situation, but any man can imagine how far such an explanation would go with a woman.

"Do you mean to say you can't clean your own walks?" she demanded.

"Oh, I can clean them, of course," I replied, "but I somehow dislike to pay somebody else for what I do myself. I presume it's foolish, but I can't help feeling that way about it."

"I'd like to see anyone make *me* pay somebody else for what I do myself!" she exclaimed.

"So would I, my dear," I returned heartily, "so would I."

"If you had the spirit of a mouse," she informed me, "you'd go out and clean that walk and take a club to anybody who tried to interfere with you."

"Yes," I agreed, "yes, very likely I would, and then I'd find that I had the furnace job on my hands for the rest of the winter and that you were elected to do the cooking and general housework. It would be a splendid exhibition of in-

dependence, of course, but rather unpleasant."

The only reply she could make to that was to tell me how different things would be if women were only men. However, they are not, even if they are trying to be, and we have to make the best of things as they are, so the walks remained uncleaned.

That brought me to the attention of the city, and a policeman called to make my duty clear to me. The city seldom pays any attention to the condition of the sidewalks in winter, but it was just my luck to have this misunderstanding come at a time when Vox Pop, Indignant Cit, Old Sub and other ready letter writers were throwing harsh words at the city officials through the columns of the newspapers.

"Better get busy with them sidewalks!" advised the policeman.

"I can't," I told him. "I'll get in trouble with the Union if I touch them."

"You'll get in trouble with the City if you don't," he retorted.

"It's a question of jurisdiction with the Union," I explained.

"There aint any question about it with the City," he asserted, "and if you don't get busy mighty sudden the City will do the work for you."

"I wish it would," I said hopefully. "That would be fine."

"You'd think so when you got the bill, with the fine added," returned the policeman.

That was enough for me. I naturally didn't want to pay city prices for the work, aside from any question of a fine, and I explained my predicament.

The policeman said it was too bad, but the City had nothing to do with any union complications, and I'd have to clean the walks or suffer the consequences. However, just to show that he was a good fellow, and in consideration of a five-dollar bill tendered and accepted, he agreed to give me time to see Kelly again before reporting my dereliction at headquarters.

Kelly was just as sorry as he could be about it, but there was nothing that he could do. It was a question of jurisdiction—

"Jurisdiction be jiggered!" I ex-

I whistled blithely as I approached the house.



claimed wrathfully. "I'm penalized either way, and yet all I'm trying to do is to show myself a good citizen. There is the Union on one side of me, telling me I can't clean my walks, and the City on the other side, telling me I must, and trouble for me if I do or I don't."

"Yes," agreed Kelly, "you somehow got caught between, without any fault of your own, and it's too bad—"

"Be careful!" I warned. "This 'too bad' business has gone far enough."

"If it was anything but a question of jurisdiction—" began Kelly.

"Go light on that jurisdiction stuff, too," I interrupted, "unless you're leading up to a solution of the problem."

"I was thinking," explained Kelly, "that I might hurry things along some. I can't settle a matter of that importance myself, but I can hurry the decision."

I pressed the mate to the policeman's five-dollar bill upon Kelly, and it didn't take much pressure either. "Now you're talking business," I commended. "How soon can you let me know whose job it is?"

"Oh, in a week perhaps—"

"A week!" I cried. "A week! Why, I'm likely to be in jail in another day."

"Too bad, but—"

I refused to hear more, but sought the companionship of my wife. She at least would not tell me it was too bad—no, indeed. She might tell me that if I had a spark of manhood I'd assert my independence in the management of my

own affairs, but I could be reasonably sure of escaping sympathy.

She asked me what I was going to do about it, and I didn't know. But of course I didn't tell her that. It is always foolish for a man to admit to his wife that he doesn't know, and it isn't usually necessary anyhow, for she is pretty sure to take that for granted. So I told her to wait until next day and see.

The policeman called and also asked me what I was going to do about it, and Mike and Joe were curious along the same line. I secured a further respite from the policeman until the following afternoon, and Mike and Joe naturally had to wait. But they were all satisfied—all but me.

Business called me out of town that day, and it was late the following afternoon when I returned. But I was happy then. I whistled blithely as I approached the house. And why not? There had been a thaw that day, so there was nothing for the policeman to report, and either Mike or Joe had lost a chance to make some money.

I nodded pleasantly to the glum trio inspecting the clean walks as I passed into the house, but I said nothing. There seemed to be no need of saying anything, for I gathered from some remarks that passed between Mike and Joe that "somebody is going to start something" at Union headquarters if that question of jurisdiction is not settled before the next snowfall.



"Get that black fob with the orange numerals."

The Trundle-Bed Trail

By Walter Jones

Author of "A Barber-Shop Sport," "The 'Younger Set' in Pembina," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM VAN DRESSER

WHY can't I, mother? All the girls go to the movies."

With a pout to the pretty young lips, Mona Wendell cut an arrow into either end of a strip of black grosgrain and selected a skein of orange colored floss from the litter that covered the sewing-table.

"Why can't you? For one thing, because I don't want you running around the streets nights." Mrs. Wendell was mending stockings in the bay window. She snapped out her answer with a decision that severed her yarn. "If high school children in my day had carried on

the way your crowd does, they'd have been spanked and sent to bed. What is that you're making? Why aren't you sewing on your middy?"

"Oh, just a fob for one of the boys. I'm going to put our class numerals on; but I don't know who I'll give it to yet. Can't I go, just with Irene and May? It's out a little after nine."

Mrs. Wendell put down the darning, brushed back a strand of graying hair from her forehead wearily, and looked at her daughter with troubled brows. "Mona, don't you even remember it's prayer meeting night? You never attend

meeting with papa and me any more. If you wont go there, you'd ought to at least have respect enough not to go anywhere else that night."

Mona bent busily over her floss. "But I do go to meeting—lots. I was planning on it again next week when they have monthly praise. And the films are educational, really they are. Mother. A man that lectured to the high school one morning said so."

"Educational! I guess you'll have enough to do to get your education out of your books. When is that special examination your professors are giving you?"

"Oh, next week sometime."

"You've had it put off twice." She resumed her mending with a sigh. "Mona, if you don't make up your grade this time, it'll just about break your father's heart. Haven't you anything to study to-night?"

"Only a little Latin; and Edna Heming's got my dictionary."

Mrs. Wendell matched a pair of hose and her mind reverted to the movies. "Mona, those pictures aren't educational. Some films may be; but the ones they show at the Pembina Bijou aren't. They're sentimental trash or worse, and I don't want a daughter of mine looking at them."

"Mother, you make me tired!" Mona stamped her foot angrily. "I s'pose you've gone and had 'em up before that old Club of yours and panned 'em. I think you're a bunch of disgusting prudes!"

"Where ever did you learn to talk to

your mother like that, I'd like to know!" Mrs. Wendell's tired face galvanized into a semblance of specious authority. "You may drop that frumpery sewing, young lady, and take your algebra, and go up to your room, and study till supper time."

Mona dumped her fob into the nearest work-basket, kicked her thimble onto the floor as an evidence of her opinion of maternal discipline, and flounced upstairs. Once in her room, she turned the

lock softly, extracted a novel of the fervid love-story type from her shirtwaist box, placed it on top of her randomly opened algebra, and began at Chapter XIX. Now and then, as she turned a page, she munched liberally from a bag of chocolates. In half an hour the front gate clicked and she saw her mother cross the street with a pile of books under her arm. Mona giggled. "She's got stuck on her Club papers again and been borrowing Miss Guilder's 'cyclopedias.'" She flattened her novel

face down on the dresser, hurried downstairs to the telephone, and called up Irene:

"Hullo, dearie. What you been doing this afternoon?... Is that so? Is it dry yet? I washed mine last Saturday.... Have you got your algebra for to-morrow?... No. When did I ever? Only one corollary, and Cora's going to let me copy her problems in the morning... About to-night? No, drat it! Mother's got one of her pious jags on and she says I can't go.... Who?... That friend

THIS IS A NEW STORY OF THE "YOUNGER SET" IN PEMBINA, WHICH, AS MR. JONES SO CONCISELY DESCRIBES IT, IS A TOWN WHERE "LESS THAN A DOZEN OF THE FELLOWS OWN DRESS SUITS." SHORT STORY CRITICS CONSIDER HIS "THE YOUNGER SET," "THE GIRL WITH A NOTE LIKE MELBA'S" AND "THE BARBERSHOP SPORT" THREE OF THE BEST SHORT STORIES IN YEARS. WE BELIEVE THIS ONE WILL ADD TO MR. JONES' LIST OF CREDITS. THE FOURTH ENTITLED TO THAT DISTINCTION. THERE ISN'T ANYTHING LIKE HIS STORIES TO BE FOUND IN ANY OTHER MAGAZINE.

of Harold's from Buffalo?... And he came all the way in his car?... Shoot! I'm just crazy to meet him. Say, listen: I'll put up a big holler at supper and make 'em let Ed take me. I'll shake him at the corner, and you and Harold meet me at Main and Maple with Mr. Cadman. We'll tag the rest of the crowd in the show.... Yes, yes, sure; at a quarter to eight. I've got to hang up now. Mother's coming. So long."

Mona whipped on an apron and was nonchalantly depositing a pickle dish upon the dining-table, as her mother entered the side door. "It's after five," she said demurely, "and I thought I'd start supper."

Mrs. Wendell's ready-made frown died pleasantly on her brow. It was seldom her offspring engaged voluntarily in domestic pursuits. "Well," she advised, "you'd better open a can of salmon and warm up those boiled potatoes. And we'll have to hurry. Here's Ed now."

The nineteen-year-old son of the house burst through the kitchen door, demanding loudly, "Hi, Mom, lay on the grub. What have you got? I'm hungrier'n ten whales."

Mona took him aside and put him "hep" to her plans for the evening. "Right-o," he chuckled; "I was just thinking how to make a get-away myself."

Sharp at five-thirty supper was on the table. Promptness was the one stipulation Wendell père demanded of his family. He was a worried-looking little man with his forehead in a perpetual wrinkle of concentration, and a contractor's pencil always behind his ear.

When the meal was well under way, Mona began the attack. "Father, I'd like to go to the picture show to-night, and Mother doesn't want me to. She says I need to study, and the pictures are silly, and she won't have me on the streets. But I'm all through with my algebra, and everybody says the pictures are just fine this week, and—please, Father!"

Now and then as she turned a page she munched liberally from a bag of chocolates.



"If your mother says you can't go, that ought to settle it." Mr. Wendell looked up abstractedly from the column of figures he was computing on an envelope beside his plate.

"But Father," begged Mona smoothly, "ten cents is all the admission, and Ed says he'll take me, and it's out by nine-thirty."

He looked across the table at his wife. "I don't know, Hattie—if she goes with her brother and they're home early?" His pencil tapped impatiently. "Old man Higgins isn't satisfied with his fireplace and I've got to figure it over again with an outside chimney. I can't be both-

ered. You settle it." And he turned back to his calculations.

"But Edward, they're away somewhere almost every night, and if you don't uphold me in anything I say—" She waited a moment: but he made no reply. "Oh, well,"—throwing up her hands helplessly,—*"I suppose you'll go."* But secretly she was not entirely displeased. She had secured some new data from Miss Guilder and she wanted a quiet evening to incorporate it into her paper for the Club.

"And where are you bound for?" Mona demanded of Ed, when they had reached a safe conversational distance from the house.

He stuck his tongue in his cheek superiorly. "Little girls mustn't ask questions."

"I know then: you're going to sit in a jack-pot at the Bachelors'. You're a regular grown-up sport, aren't you? Mind, you told me when you're five bones ahead of the game, you'd buy me a pair of tan slippers."

"Huh, I guess I wont rake in much to-night, if I have to tote you home by ten o'clock."

"Well, you'll have to, kid," she commanded, as they parted at the corner, "or Mother'll go on one regular ramp."

Mona found her trio at Main and Maple. Mr. Cadman's name was Roi. And he had his car with him. They alighted in state at the Bijou. All through the show they talked in gushy whispers—and afterwards "connected up" with May and her friend Solly. Mona tried to steer away from a slender youth who was loitering alone in the lobby; but he came up to her ag-grievedly.

"I thought you were coming with me," he said.

"Well, I did intend to, but I happened onto Irene, and Harold had his friend, and I got side-tracked. You see how it was."

"Yes, I see! Been waiting on the high school steps an hour."

"All right, Will Heming, you don't have to believe me if you don't want to."

"Stick with the crowd and don't be a grouch, Will," put in Solly.

"What'll we do?" demanded Irene. "It's too early to bust up yet."

"Go up to May's," Solly suggested; "she's got some ginger-bread and cider, and her mother's away."

The proposition met with vociferous approval.

"I can't go," wailed Mona. "Have to show up early. They're running on me at home this week."

Roi Cadman, who had taken an immediate fancy to Mona, turned toward her with a sarcastic smile. "Aw, come on. What kind of a village belle are you? Going to bed with the rompers! Why, in Buffalo, we're just taking our eye-openers now."

"I tell you,"—May came to her rescue—"Mother's gone away and your folks don't know that my sister is home; so we'll find Ed and tell him you have got to stay with me all night because I'm afraid to stay alone in the house."

"Saved!" cried the distressed damsel melodramatically. "Dearie, you've got a regular water-tight brain."

The entire crowd piled into the machine and drove up to the corner of the Wendell's home street, where they found Ed smoking a lonesome cigarette on the curbstone.

"Mind you stick to your story, young man," Mona counseled, as they honked away, "or I'll tell Father where *you* hang out nights and you wont be able to get away from the house for a month."

When they reached May's she trotted out two big sheets of ginger-bread and they fell to.

"Some eats, May! Solly gets a cook all right."

"Say, there's a kick in this cider," grinned Harold, tilting the jug for another glass.

"Oh, let's dance!" cried Mona.

"Mr. Cadman, show us the tango."

"Boys, roll up the rugs."

Irene sat down at the piano and started off a rag. Mona and May took turns with the boys—except Will, who leafed over a pile of music sulkily.

"Come on and sing," said Irene, tiring after a while. "Here's 'I Didn't Want To Do It.' You all know that."

Roi Cadman winked at Mona and

they slipped away to the hall steps.

"Not so slow for a small-town crowd," he confided.

"I guess not," said Mona proudly. "We make the dress suit squad look like a bunch of tombstones, even if we are only high schools! Are you stopping in town long, Mr. Cadman?"

"A couple of weeks—if there's anything doing."

"There will be, all right. Harold'll have some kind of a blow-out, and"—with a sudden inspiration for holding onto this swell Buffalo bet—"I'd like to give a little party while you're here. I'm indebted to everybody."

"Cards?"

"Bridge," Mona plunged blithely, though she knew the home barometer for even euchre registered low.

"How much a point?"

"Oh, just prizes. But I might manage it for a small stake."

"Sure," he advised. "It speeds the game up. And I thought, some evening, if the crowd'd like, we could take my car and go out in the country for a moonlight picnic. Were you ever on one?"

"No, but it sounds high to me. What's the stunt?"

"Oh, we just take stuff and go out in the country and cook our supper by moonlight, and sit around a bonfire afterwards, and spoon coming home. Say"—he put his slim, graceful hand suddenly over Mona's—"want to trade rings for a while?"

"Oh, I oughtn't to, really. Such a short time I've known you, Mr. Cadman." But her heart gave a joyous hurdle. She had "copped out" the classiest visitor that had invaded Pembina's junior precincts in many a day.

"You put it on and call me Roi."

She slipped her circlet of half-pearls onto his little finger; and he tried her fingers till he found one that his heavy signet fitted.

"Oh," she giggled delightedly, "there's Solly peeking!"

A moment later the whole bunch stampeded them. "The idea!" cried May. "Cultivating a crush on our hall steps! Come on, we're going to finish up with a cake-walk."

But the piano had scarcely gone into action again, when the voice of May's sister sounded over the banister: "For heavens' sake, May, are you babes going to dance all night? I've got an awful headache, and you'll jar the chandelier down surer'n time."

"Mercy, it's after midnight anyway!" exclaimed Irene.

With a chatter of interminable farewells and arrangements for future "dates," the party broke up and the car drove away shrieking its siren into the night.

As the front door closed, May and Mona fell ecstatically into each other's arms.

"Didn't we have the doggiest time to-night?"

"Who put the stick in that cider? Harold was half spiffed."

"Mona, Roi's ring is positively gorgeous!"

"And Will is as jealous as hops."

"Glory! we forgot to pull the curtains down and I suppose those old Roussman cats have been rubbering. You can't do anything in this town without it's all over Goshen by the next day."

"We should worry. Come on to bed, May; I'll bet we're going to have one grand circus these next two weeks."

II

Mona appeared at home the following afternoon with an armful of textbooks and a head full of explanations; but Mrs. Wendell had 'phoned to May's—luckily May herself answered—and found out that her daughter had domiciled there as per Ed; so the latter were not needed.

Mona had also had an interview with the principal of the high school that disposed effectually of the examination question. When she asked him for another postponement, he laughed and said she might as well adjourn it for the entire year as he shouldn't pass her anyway. "I don't care," she told him complacently, "I'd rather stay back and be in the juniors with Irene."

She delayed approaching the subject of the party until her mother's Club paper was out of the way and Mr. Cad-

man's automobile had drawn up several times before the Wendell door. Then one afternoon she said guilelessly, "Mother, I'd like to give a little party for—well, not exactly *for* Harold's friend, but while he's here. Only two tables and no prizes, because I know that's against your principles. I want you and Father to dress up and stay downstairs, and of course I'll have Ed; so it'll be quite a family affair."

Her mother had evidently been properly impressed with Mr. Cadman, for she offered no serious objections, except to the cards. "I should think," she said, "you could play flinch or authors. It doesn't look very well for church people like us to be giving card parties."

"Authors!" Mona gasped. "Why, Mother, Roi—Mr. Cadman would think we were terribly provincial if we didn't play cards. And whist is really an intellectual diversion."

"Well—" Mrs. Wendell hesitated, "I don't know—"

"It wont actually be a party. Only two tables, and I sha'n't give it out to the paper."

"But I'd have to put a new vest in my taffeta, and fancy ice-cream is so high this season—"

Mona knew that the day was won and ran to the telephone to give the invitations before her mother backed out.

Ed didn't know whether he cared to come or not. "Who wants to play whist just for fun?" he scoffed. "If you aren't even going to have prizes, I should think you would make it pedro or rum or something where you dames can screech."

Mona drooped an eyelid mysteriously. "You come and see," was all she said.

And Ed came, stiff and resplendent in an English-cut suit and a pointed collar. The "trundle-beds," as he called them, surely played a keen game; but there was nothing to "see" except a few grins and a stray cough that ran around the room when, at the finish of the hands, Mona read the high scores, just as "a reward of merit."

It was a very successful little affair. After the cards they sang college songs. And Mr. Cadman declared, over the refreshments, that the bisque Tortoni was the most delicious he had ever tasted.

The last thing at the door Mona tucked a little square envelope into Solly's hand and another into Edna Heming's. There was a great deal of giggling on the porch, and just as the big car honked away, a voice called out, "'Night, Mona. We've had a perfectly crackity time and we'll sure have to hand it to you for putting 'em over."

"What was in those envelopes?" demanded Ed suspiciously, as soon as they had shooed their fond parents to bed with the assurance that they would "redd things up."

"Three and a half—bones—apiece!" announced his sister triumphantly.

With a groan he collapsed on a couch. "Gee, and I didn't play for crippled cats! Why didn't you ease me there was something in it?"

"Because you and your crowd are always so smart and think nobody else can pull off anything."

"How'd you ever think of it?" he asked admiringly.

"Well, I just had to dope out something."

"But the dough?"

"I took that five dollars birthday money Father gave me to start a library— What do I want with a lot of books, anyway, that I haven't any time to read? And of course I had to tell everybody or they wouldn't have taken any interest in the game. The girls were just crazy. Roi thought it was the best joke he'd ever heard of; and the boys each insisted on chipping in fifty cents. So, with your share that I 'anted,' it made seven, and I divided it even. What do you think of it?"

"It sure was a beaut idea."

"And Mother never dropped!"

"Great doings in the incubator. What are you chickens hatching next?"

"A moonlight picnic for to-morrow night. Mr. Cadman's giving it to the crowd on that farm Harold's grandfather owns up beyond Bowlder Hill."

Ed yawned. "Let's stow this redding up stuff till morning. I've got to turn in. Haven't had any sleep for a week. Good time at your racket, Sis. I must say, for a high school bunch, you trundle-beds certainly know how to hit the trail."



When they reached May's, she trotted out two big sheets of

III

"Mona, I don't approve of this moonlight picnic business at all." Mrs. Wendell thumped her thimble sharply on her sewing-board. "You've been in bed only one night this week before eleven. What time does the moon rise this evening?"

"Oh, I don't know—sometime after eight," Mona evaded.

"Bring me that almanac from the kitchen."

Mona fetched it reluctantly.

"After *nine*! The idea—starting off at such an hour! If I'd have known this, I'd never have consented—"

"But Mother," appeased Mona mildly, "it has to be moonlight or we couldn't have any picnic. And we can't make the moon rise any earlier."



gingerbread and they fell to.

As there was no answer to this irrefutable argument, Mrs. Wendell directed her objections along other lines. "It is all very well for you young people to give a few simple affairs for your Buffalo friend; but the thing has gone far enough. We had all the expense we could stand for your party; and now here you are again the next day baking up a rich cake. Who's going to be your chaperon?"

"I'm not sure, but I think May's sister."

"May's sister! Why, she isn't thirty yet herself! If I only felt better acquainted with some of these girls' mothers, I'd call them up and object. You can go to-night; but remember, this has got to end your gadding."

It was a trying afternoon for Mona. Her mother pursued the picnic theme with variations up to the very moment when the siren of Roi's car sounded at the curb; yet even Mrs. Wendell was not displeased to notice that the seat of honor beside Mr. Cadman had been reserved for her daughter.

It was a gay party, crowded but carefree, that sped out from Pembina over the winding white ribbon of the still country road. There were two chafing-dishes in the rumble and Solly was armed with a kerosene stove for the coffee.

"Glory, man," cried Irene, "you almost sat in my chocolate cake!"

"How's the kick in your cider to-night, May?"

"Pipe the flannel pants on Harold."

"Where's Will Heming?"

"Sore on Mona. He wouldn't come."

"Some speed artist, Roi."

"Tell him to slow up on the curve at the foot of Bowlder."

But they were already at the curve and a momentary thrill of suspense clutched them as they clattered over the Bowl-

der Creek bridge, grazed a big rock on the edge of the roadside, and shot on up the incline with undiminished speed.

"There's the farm," pointed Harold, as they reached the summit, "and we camp this side of the orchard."

All hands sprang down and laid out the provisions. While the girls cooked, the boys gathered wood for the bonfire. Everybody voted it a bang-up spread.

For an hour they ate; next they toasted marshmallows for another, then told ghost stories, and wound up with an Indian war-dance.

"Listen!" cried some one.

A rooster crowed from a distant barnyard.

Solly looked at his watch. "A quarter to three!"

Mona whistled softly to herself.

"What's the matter?" asked May.

"I'll bet Mother'll be good and peevish."

"Oh, she'll get over it in a day or two—but I'm glad mine's away. We should've had a chaperon. I s'pose."

"Everybody in?" cried Solly.

"Let her rip, Roi."

"We forgot May's cider-jug."

"Never mind. It's empty."

"Show us your speed, Caddy."

Mona put her hand on his arm. "Remember, we're not far from the hill," she cautioned.

"Right-o, little girl." He leaned over and whispered, "Maybe if I didn't have this wheel to bother with, we wouldn't hold hands some!"

"Roi, aren't we going awfully fast?"

"Naw, not very. They wanted speed and I'm showing 'em."

"What'll we sing?"—from the rear.

"Dixie?"

"No—'We Wont Go Home Till Morning.'"

"Whoop 'er up, everybody."

"We're almost to the top of the hill there, kid," called Solly.

"Roi!" Mona's hand was on his arm again: her face had gone white. "We're beginning to go down."

He nodded. "It's a long hill. I can stop her quick."

"But the bend?"

He did not answer.

Mona said no more. She sat very still, clutching the seat and peering ahead. It must be all right. The crowd was singing lustily and they were surely slackening speed a little but—Suddenly she heard a ripping sound and Roi swearing under his breath. She braced herself. The car skidded, gave a lurch; she closed her eyes, shrieked, and the next instant went hurtling through the air.

IV

"Mona!"

"Irene! Dearie, I've been just crazy, lying here thinking about you! And every day I've expected you'd come."

Mona reclined on the dainty white bed in her room in a crêpe de chine negligée, with her feet resting in a soft nest of pillows. When she had smothered her friend in a first frantic embrace, she reached up and pushed the hair back from Irene's forehead. "I've been *so* worried about you. Will it leave a scar?"

"Only a little. But they had to take titches. Mother fainted dead away, when they brought me home." Irene shuddered. "How's your foot?"

"Oh, doing fine now. In splints. It was only a sprain."

They looked at each other a moment in deep silence. Irene brushed a wisp of lace over her misty eyes. "Oh, Mona, wasn't it terrible?"

"And me sitting right there beside him."

"I suppose it was the wheel that pinned—"

"Dearie—listen—no, put your ear down."

"Mona, he didn't!"

"He did. His last words—swearing."

Irene coughed delicately. "There wasn't anything between you?"

"No, only I—never got my ring back. Of course it'll always be dreadfully sad, but you—you don't think I'd ought to let it blight my life, do you?"

"I should say not, Mona, I don't want to say anything that'll make you feel bad if you thought a lot of him, but I don't believe he was as nice as our own boys. I think he was kind of snobby and just wanted to *exploit* us. Harold says he'd been a regular speed maniac and already smashed up two cars. If he'd cared much about you or the crowd, I shouldn't have imagined he'd try that stunt."

Mona was silent a moment; then she broke out hectically, "Irene, get his ring,—it's in that little rose jar on the dresser—get it, and throw it out the window. I think the whole business has been just hateful! And I'm all to blame. If I hadn't been so gone on him, probably he wouldn't have stayed over and I would-

n't have drawn the rest of you into it. Poor kid, though"—she burst into remorseful tears,—"he's the one that paid. I guess I'll keep the ring, Irene. It won't do any harm now. How's Solly?"

"Skipping round flip as ever."

"And nobody else really hurt?"

"No, only bruises."

There was a pause. The conversation was approaching another crisis. Finally, "Is it out?" asked Mona.

"Yes. All over town."

"Names and all?"

"Of course. And it seems the farmer's folks there at the foot of the hill carried on so and asked so many questions that Harold lost his head and offered them all the money he had, not to give out the girls' names. And now every old gossip in Pembina has got hold of it!"

"And that isn't all that's leaked about us. Listen,"—with impressive despair: "Some old hen that signs herself 'Citizeness,' has written to the paper and says the whole thing is a solemn warning, and what is the younger generation coming to, when high school pupils trail around the country after midnight without chaperons, gamble in their own homes, and tiddle—it must have been Roussman's rubbering that night when the curtains were up at May's—and conduct themselves like all-around hoodlums?"

"And there is an editorial that doesn't answer the old thing at all, but just says, while it agrees with its correspondent, Pembina ought to be thankful the young people were snatched from the jaws of death, and maybe parents and teachers can find a wholesome lesson in some bearings of the sad tragedy, as well as the victims. Why, dearie, what's the matter? Does your foot pain you?"

"Not much," whimpered Mona, between sobs, "but I feel just *despicable* about that old party and those three-fifties. Mother knows. She doesn't say anything, but every time she comes into the room she looks so *crêpey* and crushed. Irene, my doctor's bill will be over fifty dollars—and Father didn't get the bid for that new school building he's been counting on. And my losing my grade, and all—"

"Oh, cheer up," Irene comforted. "I guess they're glad enough you're alive."

She pulled a tiny bud from a bowl of tea roses. "My dear, your room's a regular hot-house. Who sent you these?"

"Solly."

"Haven't the boys been just dandy?"

"They sure have."

"Harold's been up at the house 'most every day inquiring after me, and I've made him promise to go on the water-wagon for good."

Mona's eyes roamed over the counterpane, and the wicker table, and her shirt-waist box, all strewn with bonbons, books and flowers. But there was one token lacking. She sighed deeply. "Irene, there's something I want you to do for me. I've waited, because I couldn't trust anyone 'else. Go to my dresser and get that black fob with the orange numerals,—it's in the middle drawer—and put it in this letter,"—she reached under her pillow for a pale lavender envelope—"and mail it for me. It's just a note to—you know who, and it says I'm sorry. Oh, Irene, it's so *humiliating*! Do you think he'll make it up with me?"

"Of course, silly. He goes around in a regular funk and calls up your doctor every day. Told Harold he'd like to come to see you, but he was afraid you'd freeze him. Well, I'm off."

Irene ran over to the dresser, straightened her hat, gave her cheeks a dab with a swansdown, and came back to the bed for a farewell embrace.

"Irene"—Mona clung to her lingeringly—"we've made a dreadful mess of ourselves, haven't we?"

"Yes, kiddo, we sure have."

"And if we get out of this, we'll never get in another?"

"Never! And I'll tell you one thing: when the bunch comes together again, we certainly will have to buckle down to brass tacks and show everybody there is something in us after all. I guess we've been about the flyest high school crowd ever! And from now on, Miss Wendell," she concluded solemnly, "I'm going to be very circumspect."

"Me too," echoed Mona meekly. "I'm going to give up bridge for this winter anyway, and hem all Mother's new table linen, and join Miss Guilder's Bible Class, and reform Ed, and never go out without a chaperon *tied* to me!"



A LITTLE ALIEN in the WILDERNESS

BY CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

Author of "The Shadows and John Hatch," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY NORMAN BORCHARDT

If was too hot, and clear, and still, that morning, for the most expert of fishermen to cast his fly with any hope of success. The broad, pale-green lily-pads lay motionless on the unruffled breast of Silverwater. Nowhere even the round ripple of a rising minnow broke the blazing sheen of the lake. The air was so drowsy that those sparks of concentrated energy, the dragon-flies, forgot to chase their aerial quarry, and slept, blazing like amethysts and emeralds, on the tops of the cat-tail rushes

Very lazily, and without the slightest reluctance, Uncle Andy reeled in his line, secured his cast, and leaned his rod securely in a forked branch to await more favorable conditions for his pet pastime. For the present it seemed to him that nothing could be more delightful and more appropriate to the hour than to lie under the thick-leaved maple at the top of the bank, and smoke, and gaze out in lotus-eating mood across the enchanted radiance of the water. Even the Child, usually as restless as the dragon-flies themselves or those ex-

ponents of perpetual motion, the brown water-skippers, was lying on his back, quite still, and staring up with round, contemplative blue eyes through the diaphanous green of the maple-leaves.

Though his eyes were so very wide open, it was that extreme but ephemeral openness which a child's eyes so frequently assume just before closing up very tight. In fact, in just about three-eighths of a minute he would have been, in all probability, sound asleep, with a rose pink light, sifted through his eyelids, dancing joyously over his dreams. But at that moment there came a strange cry from up the sweeping curve of the shore—so strange a cry that the Child sat up instantly very straight, and demanded, with a gasp: "What's that?"

Uncle Andy did not answer for a moment. Perhaps it was because he was busy lighting his pipe, or perhaps he hoped to hear the sound again before committing himself—for so experienced a woodsman as he was had good reason to know that most of the creatures of the wild have many different cries and sometimes seem to imitate each other in the strangest fashion. He had not long to wait. The wild voice sounded again and again, so insistently, so appealingly, that the Child became greatly excited over it. The sound was something between the bleat of an extraordinarily harsh-voiced kid and the scream of a badly frightened merganser, but more penetrating and more strident than either.

"Oh, it's frightened, Uncle Andy!" exclaimed the Child. "What do you think it is? What does it want? Let's go and see if we can't help it!"

The pipe was drawing all right now, because Uncle Andy had made up his mind.

"It's nothing but a young fawn, a baby deer," he answered. "Evidently it has got lost, and it's crying for its mother. With a voice like that it ought to make her hear if she's anywhere alive,—if a bear has not jumped on her and broken her neck for her. Ah, there she comes," he added, as the agitated bell-ing of a doe sounded from further back in the woods. The two cries answered each other at intervals for a couple of minutes, rapidly nearing. And then they were silent.

The Child heaved a sigh of relief. "I'm so glad he found his mother again!" he murmured. "It must be terrible to be lost in the woods—to be *quite* alone, and not know, when you cried, whether it would be your mother or a bear that would come running to you from under the black trees!"

"I agree with you," said Uncle Andy, with unwonted heartiness. It was not too often that he was able to agree completely with the Child's suggestions in regard to the affairs of the wild. "Yes, indeed," he added, reminiscently. "I tried it myself once, when I was about your age, away down in the Lower Ottanooosis Valley, when the country thereabouts was not settled like it is now. And I didn't like it at all. Let me tell you."

"What came?" demanded the Child breathlessly. "Was it your mother, or a bear?"

"Neither!" responded Uncle Andy. "It was Old Tom Saunders, Bill's uncle,—only he wasn't old, or Bill's uncle, at that time, as you may imagine if you think about it."

"Oh," said the Child, a little disappointed. He had rather hoped it was the bear, since he felt assured of his uncle's ultimate safety.

"And I knew a little Jersey calf once," continued Uncle Andy, being now fairly started in his reminiscences and unwilling to disappoint the Child's unfailing thirst for a story, "in the same woods, who thought she was lost when she wasn't, and made just as much noise over it as if she had been. That, you see, was what made all the trouble. She was a good deal of a fool at that time—which was not altogether to be wondered at, seeing that she was only one day old—and when her mother left her sleeping under a bush for a few minutes, whilst she went down through the swamp to get a drink at the brook a couple of hundred feet away, the little fool woke up and thought herself deserted. She set up such a bleating as was bound to cause something to happen in that wild neighborhood."

"Yes!" said the Child, almost in a whisper. "And which came *this* time, her mother or the bear?"

"Both!" replied Uncle Andy, most unexpectedly.

"Oh!" gasped the Child, opening his mouth till it was as round as his eyes. And for once he had not a single question ready.

"You see, it was this way," went on Uncle Andy, prudently giving him no time to think up one. "When the bear heard that noise, he knew very well that the calf was all alone. And being hungry, he lost no time in coming to seize the opportunity. What he didn't know was that the mother was so near. Naturally, he would never think the calf would make such a fuss if the mother were only down by the brook getting a drink. So he came along through the bushes at a run, taking no precautions whatever. And the mother came up from the brook at a run. And they met in a little open spot, about fifty feet from where the foolish calf stood bawling under her bush. She stopped bawling, and stood staring, when she saw the bear and her mother meet.

"The bear was a big one, very hungry, and savage at the slightest hint that his meal, right there in sight, was going to be interfered with. The mother was a little fawn-colored Jersey cow, with short, sharp horns pointing straight forward—and game to the last inch of her trim make-up. Her fury, at sight of that black bulk approaching her foolish young-one, was nothing short of a madness. But it was not a blind madness. She knew what she was doing, and was not going to let rage lose her a single point in the game of life and death.

"In spite of her disadvantage in being down the slope and so having to charge straight up hill, she hurled herself at the bear with a ferocity that rather took him aback. He wheeled, settled upon his haunches, and lifted a massive fore-paw, to meet the attack with a blow that should settle the affair at once. But the little cow was not to be caught so. Almost as the bear delivered his lunging stroke she checked herself, jumped aside with a nimbleness that no bull could have begun to match, and sank both horns deep into her great antagonist's flank.

"Before she could spring back again beyond his reach, however, with a harsh groan he swung about, and with the readiness of an accomplished boxer

brought down his other fore-paw across her neck, smashing the spine. Without a sound the gallant little cow crumpled up, and fell in a heap against the bear's haunches.

"Throwing her off violently, he struck her again and again, as if in a panic. Then, realizing that she was quite dead, he drew away, bit fiercely at the terrible wound in his flank, and dragged himself away, whimpering. For the time, at least, his appetite was quite gone.

"Uncomprehending, but very anxious, the calf had watched the swift duel. The finish of it dismayed her, but, of course, she did not know why. She could only feel that, in spite of the disappearance of the bear, it was not altogether satisfactory. She had trembled, instinctively, at sight of the bear. And now, curiously enough, she trembled at the sight of her mother, lying there in a heap, so still."

Uncle Andy's way of putting it was somehow so vivid that the Child trembled too, at that.

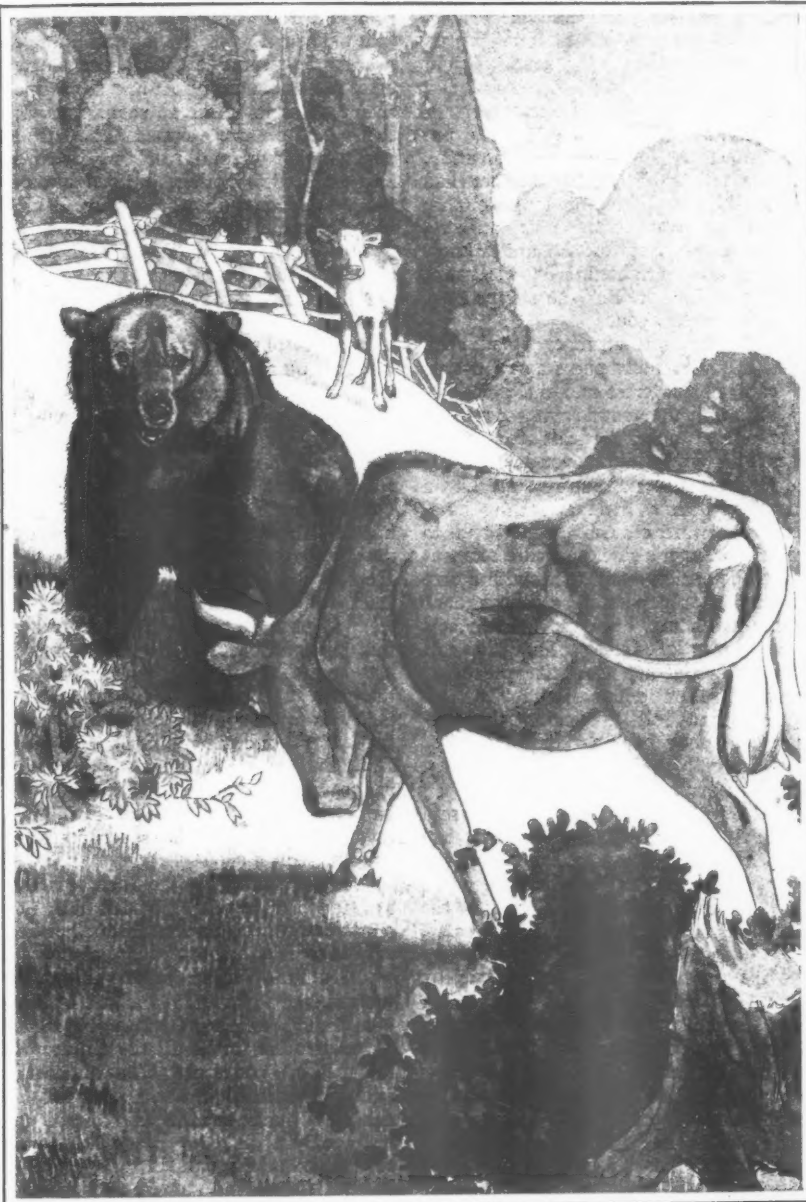
"After a while," continued Uncle Andy, "when she saw that her mother made no sign of rising and coming to her, she came staggering down from her place under the bush, her long, awkward legs very difficult to manage. Reaching her mother's side, she poked her coaxingly with her wet little muzzle. Meeting no response, she poked her impatiently, and even butted her. When even this brought no response, a sudden overwhelming terror chilled her heart, and her weak knees almost gave way. She had an impulse to run from this thing, that looked like her mother, and smelt like her mother, and yet evidently, after all, was *not* her mother. She was afraid to stay there. But she was also afraid to go away. And then, she just began to bawl again, at the top of her voice—for she was not only frightened and lonely, but also hungry.

"Of course, everything in the woods for half a mile around heard her bawling."

And just here Uncle Andy had the heartlessness to pause and relight his pipe.

"And then—another bear came!" broke in the Child, breathlessly.

"No, not exactly," responded Uncle



The bear was a big one, very hungry, and savage. The mother of the calf was a fawn-colored Jersey, with short, sharp horns—and game to the last inch.

Andy at last. "Of course, lots of things came, to see what all that queer noise was about—stealthy things, creeping up silently and peering with round, bright eyes from thickets and weed-tufts. But the calf did not see or notice any of these. All she saw was a tall, dark, ungainly-looking, long-legged creature, half as tall again as her mother had been, with no horns, a long, clumsy head, thick, overhanging nose, and big splay hooves. She didn't quite know whether to be frightened at this great, dark form, or not. But she stopped her noise. I can tell you.

"Well, the tall stranger stood still, about thirty or forty paces away, eyeing the calf with interest and the fawn-colored heap on the ground with suspicion. Then all at once the calf forgot her fears. She was so lonely, you know—and the stranger did not look at all like a bear. So, with a little appealing ba-a, she ran forward clumsily, straight up to the tall stranger's side, paused a moment at the alien smell—and then, with a cool impudence only possible at the age of twenty-five hours, began to help herself to a dinner of fresh milk. The tall stranger turned her great dark head far around, sniffed doubtfully for a few seconds, and fell to licking the presumptuous one's back assiduously."

"I know," said the Child proudly. "It was a moose."

"I'd have been ashamed of you," said Uncle Andy. "if you hadn't known that at once from my description. Of course, it was a cow moose. But where the calf's great piece of luck came in was in the fact that the moose had lost *her* calf, just the day before, through its falling into the river and being swept away by the rapids. Her heart was heavy with grief and loneliness; her udder was aching with the pressure of its milk; she had been drawn up to see what manner of baby it was that dared to cry its misery so openly here in the dangerous forest. And when the calf adopted her so confidently, after a brief shyness—the shyness of all wild things toward the creatures who have come under man's care—she returned the compliment of adopting the calf.

"After a little, when the calf had satisfied its appetite, she led it away

through the trees. It followed readily enough for a while—for perhaps half a mile. Then it got tired, and stopped with its legs sprawled apart, and bawled after her appealingly. At first she seemed surprised at its tiring so soon. But with a resigned air she stopped. The calf at once lay down, and resolutely went to sleep. Its wild mother, puzzled but patient, stood over it protectingly, licking its silky coat, (so much softer than her own little one's had been) and smelling it all over as if unable to get used to the peculiar scent. When it woke up, she led it on again, this time for perhaps a good mile before it began to protest against such incomprehensible activity. And so, by easy stages and with many stops, she led the little alien on, deep into her secret woods, and brought it, about sunset, to the shore of a tiny secluded lake.

"That same evening the farmer, looking for his strayed cow, came upon the dead body on the slope above the stream. He saw the marks of the fight, and the tracks of the bear, and understood the story in part. But he took it for granted that the bear, after killing the mother, had completed the job by carrying off the calf. The tracks of the moose he paid no attention to, never dreaming that they concerned him in the least. But the bear he followed, vowing vengeance, till he lost the trail in the gathering dusk, and had to turn home in a rage, consoling himself with plans for bear-traps.

"In her home by the lake, caressed and tenderly cared-for by her tall, new mother, the calf quickly forgot her real mother's fate. She forgot about the whole affair—except for one thing: she remembered to be terribly afraid of bears—and that fear is indeed the beginning of wisdom, as far as all the children of the wild are concerned. She would start and tremble at sight of any particularly dense and bulky shadow, and to come unexpectedly upon a big black stump was for some weeks a painful experience.

"But the second step in wisdom—the value of silence—she was very slow to learn. If her new mother got out of her sight for half a minute she would begin bawling after her in a way that must have been a great trial to the nerves of

a reticent, noiseless moose-cow. The latter, moreover, could never get over the idea that to cause all that noise some dreadful danger must be threatening. She would come charging back on the run, her mane stiff along her neck and her eyes glaring; and she would hunt every thicket in the neighborhood before she could feel quite reassured. Meanwhile the calf would look on with wonder in her big, velvet-soft eyes, with probably no slightest notion in her silly head as to what was making her new mother so excited."

"How inconvenient, that they couldn't talk!" exclaimed the Child, who had great faith in the virtue of explanations. Uncle Andy rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"I suppose," said he after a pause, "that the wild creatures *do* talk among themselves, more or less and after a fashion. But, you see, such simple speech as the calf possessed was only what she had inherited, and that, of course, was cow language, and naturally unintelligible to a moose. However, babies learn easily, and it was not long before she and her new mother understood each other pretty well on most points of importance.

"There were wild cats and foxes, and a pair of big, tuft-eared, wild-eyed lynxes, living about the lake, and these all came creeping up one after another, under the cover of the thickets, to stare in amazement at the alien little-one so tenderly mothered by the great cow-moose. They had seen calves, on the farms of the Settlement, and they regarded this one not only with the greed of the hungry prowler, but with a particularly cruel hostility as one of the retainers of feared and hated Man. But for all their anger they took care not to thrust themselves upon the attention of the moose. They appreciated too well the fury of her mother-wrath, the swiftness and deadliness of the stroke of her knife-edged forehooves. They were not going to let their curiosity obscure their discretion, you may be sure—as some of the childish deer and antelope often do!"

"Why?" interrupted the Child eagerly, being all at once consumingly anxious to know what the deer and antelope

were curious about. But Uncle Andy paid no attention whatever.

"Then one morning," he continued, "two other moose-cows came along up the lake shore, followed by their long-legged, shambling youngsters. They stopped to discuss the condition of lily-roots with their tall sister, but at the sight of her nursing and petting and mothering a *calf*, a baby of the cattle tribe, whom they despised and hated for its subservience to man and for living tamely behind fences, they became quite disagreeable. They sniffed loudly and superciliously. The calf, however—looking very small and neat, and bright in her clean coat of fawn-color, beside the gaunt, awkward moose-babies—was not in the least afraid of the disagreeable strangers. She pranced up boldly to investigate them.

"They wouldn't be investigated by the saucy little alien, and in a moment of folly one of them struck at her. The foster-mother had been watching their attitude with jealous eyes and rising wrath, and now her wrath exploded.

"With a hoarse bleat she sprang upon the offender, and sent her sprawling down the bank, clean into the water. Then she turned upon the other. But this one, with quick discretion, was already trotting off hastily, followed by the two awkward youngsters. The triumphant foster-mother turned to the calf and anxiously smelt it all over to make sure it had not been hurt. And the rash cow in the water, boiling with wrath but afraid to risk a second encounter, picked herself up from among the lily-pads and shambled away after her retreating party.

"As the summer deepened, however, the calf began to feel and act more like a moose-calf, to go silently, and even to absorb some of her foster-mother's smell. The other moose began to get used to her, even quite to tolerate her, and the wild creatures generally ceased to regard her as anything but a very unusual kind of moose. Of course, she *thought* she *was* a moose. She grew strong, sleek, and nimble-footed on her foster-mother's abundant milk, and presently learned to browse on the tender leaves and twigs of the fresh green shrubbery. She soon, however, found that the short, sweet



The calf would look on with wonder in her big, velvet-soft eyes.

grasses of the forest glades were much more to her taste than any leaves or stringy twigs. But the lily-roots which her foster-mother taught her to pull from the muddy lake-bottom, as they wallowed luxuriously side by side in the cool water, defying flies and heat, suited her admirably.

"The great black moose-bulls—hornless at this season and fat and amiable as sheep—regarded her with a reserved curiosity; and the moose-calves, the strangeness of her form and color once worn off, treated her with great respect. Though she was so much smaller and lighter than they, her quickness on her feet and her extremely handy way of butting made her easily master of them all. Even the supercilious young cow who had been so disagreeable to her at first grew indifferently friendly; and all was peace around the secluded little lake.

"One late afternoon, however, when the shadows were getting long and black across the forest glades, the peace was momentarily broken. The calf was pasturing in one of the glades, while her foster-mother was wallowing and splashing down among the lilies. A bear, creeping up through the thickets so noiselessly that not even a sharp-eyed chickadee or a vigilant red squirrel took alarm, peered out between the branches, and saw the calf.

"As luck would have it, it was the same old bear! He had recovered from his wound, but naturally he had not forgotten the terrible horns of the little fawn-colored Jersey cow. When he saw the fawn-colored calf he flew into a rage, and hurled himself forth at her to avenge in one stroke the bitter and humiliating memory.

"But the calf was too quick for him. At the first crackling of the branches behind her she had jumped away like a deer. From the corner of her eye she saw the great black shape rushing upon her; and with a wild cry, half the bawl of a calf, half the bleat of a young moose, she went racing, tail in air, down to the water, with the bear at her heels.

"With a terrific splashing the cow-moose hurried to the rescue. She was a very big moose, and she was in a very big rage; and very formidable she

looked as she came ploughing her way to shore, sending up the water in fountains before her. The bear knew well that a full-grown cow-moose was an awkward antagonist to tackle, when she was in earnest. This one seemed to him to be very much in earnest. He hesitated, and stopped his rush when about half way down the bank. Caution began to cool his vengeful humor. After all, it seemed there was really no luck for him in a fawn-colored calf. He'd try a red one, or a black and white one, next time. As he came to this conclusion, the indignant moose came to shore. Whereupon he wheeled with a grunt, and made off, just a little faster, perhaps, than was *quite* consistent with his dignity, into the darkness of the fir-thickets. The moose, with the coarse hair standing up stiffly along her neck, shook herself and stood glaring after him.

"Through the summer and autumn the calf found it altogether delightful being a moose. But as the cold began to bite, with her thin, delicate skin she felt it painfully. After the first heavy snow-fall she had a lot of trouble to get food, having to paw down through the snow for every mouthful of withered grass. When the snow got to be three or four feet deep, and her foster-mother, along with a wide-antlered bull, three other cows, and a couple of youngsters, had trodden out a 'moose-yard' with its maze of winding alleys, her plight grew sore. All along the bottom edges of these alleys she nibbled the dead grass and dry herbage, and she tried to browse, like her companions, on the twigs of poplar and birch. But the insufficient, unnatural food, and the sharp frost, hit her hard. She would huddle up beneath her mother's belly, or crowd down among the rest of the herd, for warmth; but long before Christmas she had become a mere bag of bones."

The Child shivered sympathetically. But he could not help inquiring:

"Why didn't she make herself a house in the snow?"

"Didn't know enough!" answered Uncle Andy shortly. "Did you ever hear of any of the cow kind having sense enough for that? Well, it's a pretty sure thing, you may take it, that she would never have pulled through the winter, if

something unexpected hadn't happened to change her luck.

"It was the farmer—the one who had owned her mother, and who, of course, really owned her too.

"With his hired man, a team of two powerful backwoods horses, a big sled, and axes, and food, he had come into the woods to cut the heavy spruce timber which grew around the lake. A half mile back from the lake, on the opposite shore, he had established his snug log camp and his warm little barn full of hay. He and his man had everything they needed for their comfort, except fresh meat. And when they came upon the winding paths of the 'moose-yard,' they knew they were not going to lack meat for long.

"On the following day, on snowshoes, the two men explored the 'yard,' tramping along beside the deep-trodden trails. Soon they came upon the herd, and marked the lofty antlers of the bull towering over a bunch of low fir-bushes. The farmer raised his heavy rifle. It was an easy shot. He fired; and the antlered head went down.

"At the sound of the shot, and the fall of their trusted leader, the herd scattered in panic, breasting down the walls of their paths and floundering off through the deep snow. The two men stared after them with interest, but made no motion for another shot—for it was against the New Brunswick law to kill a cow-moose, and if the farmer had indulged himself in such a luxury it would have cost him about five hundred dollars by way of fine.

"Among the fleeing herd appeared a little fawn-colored beast, utterly unlike any moose-calf that the farmer or his man had ever heard of. It was tre-

mendously nimble at first, bouncing along at such a rate that it was impossible to get a really good look at it. But its legs were much too short for such a depth of snow, and before it had gone fifty yards it was quite used up. It stopped, floundered on another couple of yards, and then lay down quite helplessly. The two men hurried up. It turned upon them a pair of large, melting, velvet eyes—frightened indeed, but not with that hopeless, desperate terror that comes to the eyes of the wild creatures when they are trapped.

"'Well, I'll be jiggered, if that aint old Blossom's calf, that we made sure the bear had carried off!' cried the farmer, striding up and gently patting the calf's ribs. 'My, but you're poor!' he went on. 'They haint used ye right out here in the woods, have they? I reckon ye'll be a sight happier back home in the old barn.'"

Uncle Andy knocked the ashes out of his pipe and stuck it back in his pocket.

"That's all!" said he, seeing that the Child still looked expectant.

"But," protested the Child, "I want to know—"

"Now, you know very well all the rest," said Uncle Andy. "What's the use of my telling you how the calf was taken back to the Settlement, and got fat, and grew up to give rich milk like cream, as every good Jersey should? You can think all that out for yourself, you know."

"But the moose-cow," persisted the Child, "didn't she feel *dreadful*?"

"Well," agreed Uncle Andy, "perhaps she did. But don't you go worrying about that. She got over it. The next spring she had another calf, a real moose-calf, to look after, you know."

The Great God Gold

A NEW MYSTERY STORY BY THE
AUTHOR OF "THE SABLE LORCHA"

By Horace Hazeltine

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM OBERHARDT

THE ancient Romans were wrong. Gold, and not Janus, is the god of gates and avenues. Shelley knew this. He put it in command of all earthly roads save one. Virtue alone defied its scornful rule. So nowadays we find it shutting the doors of truth and barring the way to justice. The rich man may kill and go free. Suicides, through the yellow god's agency, become natural deaths. John Keble, for instance, died of "acute indigestion." His family physician put it in the death certificate, and so closed the gate that otherwise would have admitted the coroner. There are those who say the family physician's bill for writing those two words was ten thousand dollars. That is how the god of gates and avenues managed it.

In the selection of a malady, however, the family physician was too hasty. To have earned his money he should have chosen one less well understood: one that was infectious, perhaps, or one that in reason could have bestowed an hereditary taint. Then similar symptoms developing within five days in the departed John Keble's daughter would have appeared consistent. Under the urge of self-defence the family physician spoke of a "sympathetic affection," and prescribed for the young woman—who was suffering great gastric pain, nausea and difficulty in breathing—belladonna, which relieved her. Unwittingly she named the drug the next day in a conversation with Pelham. And out of that grew the truth. Virtue, calm-eyed and

impregnable, defied and dismayed the great god Gold.

Pelham's interest in the case was not exactly official. The district attorney's office, with which both he and I are connected in the capacity of assistant prosecutors, was not invoked. Carol de Broqueville—Keble's daughter was one of those anomalous creatures, a happily married American *duchesse*—suspected nothing irregular. That belladonna was not a specific for acute indigestion was without the range of her knowledge. I am inclined to believe, however, that had she known, she would have preferred condonation to an appeal to the law and the involved notoriety. But there had been a time when Pelham and Carol talked romance to each other and imagined it colored beautifully their friendship. Which, of course, was before she went abroad for a year with the Vansittarts and met the charming little sun-bronzed heir to an ancient title, just back from lion hunting in French West Africa. She had been married, now, for upwards of three years, and had come over for the tail end of the Newport season. After that, de Broqueville had gone West with a party of capitalists to look over an alluring mining proposition, and Carol had been awaiting his return at her old home on upper Fifth Avenue when her father was so suddenly and fatally stricken.

Pelham's call was one of condolence, and it was in a little flash of the old intimacy that the *Duchesse* made the inadvertent reference to her own brief indis-

position and to the belladonna. Discreetly, with painstaking care not to suggest the existence of motive, the caller gathered an array of facts so startling that investigation seemed imperative. Intuition as a rule plays a large part in Pelham's conduct of such matters, and I doubt not it was an active agent in the present affair; but it was what he had learned, rather than what he imagined, which dictated the confident assertion of that evening in a quiet, secluded corner of the club lounge.

"John Keble didn't die of acute indigestion," he informed me. "He was poisoned."

Until that moment the truth had not been so much as intimated. In my amazement I think I voiced a fatuous exclamation. Then:

"Poisoned?" I heard myself asking.

"Undoubtedly," said Pelham with decision. "But why and how? There lies the problem."

"You mean accidentally," I suggested. For I could imagine no grimmer, more tragic corollary.

"I fear not," he returned; and low-voiced, since a word overheard might prove a lighted fuse to public scandal, he outlined the story. But it was the filling-in that held for me the larger interest. There were spots in it that were graphic. There, for example, was his little thumb-nail sketch of Keble, the self-made millionaire. I knew him as a thousand men knew him, from occasional glimpses in public, from articles in the newspapers and magazines: a tall, spare, rugged, gray man of sixty, possessed of a certain indomitable magnetic power, which had found its field of action in grouping, connecting and combining into one great system a score or more of independent but tottering railroad properties. But Pelham's knowledge of him was from association. He knew the little, intimate details of his personality. He had the measure of his limitations.

"Keble was a man of contradictions," was the way he put it. "He was an epicure, yet devoted to the toothpick. He loved literature, but never turned a page without wetting his finger. He was an almost infallible judge of ceramics, yet a cupid was essential to his comfort."

He drew a picture, too, of how death came to the great man.

"He was alone in his library, reading. The *Duchesse* had gone with some friends to the opera. She had begged him to join her there; and he had promised. When he failed to appear she was vaguely alarmed. Nevertheless she accompanied the party to Sherry's. It was there the butler reached her by telephone; and she hurried home to find her father stretched inert and pallid, his eyes bulging blindly, upon the library couch. Even then he was beyond hope."

"But his physician?" The query leapt from me.

"Arrived at the same moment as the daughter. It seems Keble had rung and ordered brandy, which was fetched by the butler. He was then doubled with pain, and the butler naturally suggested calling Dr. Barstow. But the old stalwart would have none of it. 'It's only that devilish *sauce Béarnaise* of Leon's,' he mumbled, 'I'm getting too old for it.' And then he tumbled face downward to the floor, an unconscious lump. With the aid of the second man, the butler lifted him to the couch and got busy with the telephone."

"Dr. Barstow prescribed?"

"I understand not. Keble died while he was examining him. It was Carol who suggested the acute indigestion theory, born of the reported utterance about the *sauce Béarnaise*, and bred of previous attacks. There was a suggestion from some one. I am told, of ptomaine poisoning being more probable. As for Barstow, he wished to make an autopsy, but the entire family objected, led, I believe, by young Grant Keble."

At this I frowned. "That scapegrace!"

But Pelham only smiled whimsically. "A duck and a drake and a ha'penny cake!" he quoted for rejoinder. Then: "Eloise—Mrs. Duncan, the elder daughter, you know—seems to have sniffed the irregular. But she and her husband were the only ones that did. She wondered if by any chance that Alsatian, Leon, could have injected an insidious poison in, for instance, that *sauce Béarnaise*. The chef, it seems, knew that Keble had remembered all his old servants in his will, and



She hurried home to find her father inert and pallid on a couch. Even then he was beyond hope.

for months Leon had been wishing to return to Alsace and buy a farm. Eloise ventured the conjecture in the presence of Barstow, and the physician only shrugged. The rest of the family seemed horrified beyond words at such an assumption.

"And when Duncan—you know the self-righteous cad he is—began a series of conjectures that indicated a possible suicide theory, the importance of avoiding the proposed autopsy became all the more pressing. It seems to be a fact, by the way, that Keble was not without serious worries of late over the attitude of the Interstate Commerce Commission. Grant finally took the floor and so convinced the Duncans that the faintest whisper of such utterly untenable sensationalism would have the direst results in the financial world that an unanimous appeal was brought to bear upon the reluctant Barstow. He agreed to forego the autopsy purely out of consideration for the bereaved family. He will not be without his reward."

"You mean—?" I began.

"I know the Doctor," was Pelham's quick answer. "He is very learned and very experienced. He never could have had a doubt about the poison. It required no autopsy to tell him. But he knew where his best interests lay. Whatever he gets, it will be worth it."

Having lighted a fresh cigarette, Pelham leaned back against the chair cushions and lifted reflective eyes to the ceiling. Beneath and interwoven with all he had conveyed was a riddle.

"Is the *Duchesse* suspicious now?" I inquired.

"Hardly," was his answer, his gaze meeting mine once more. "Still, I think that she realizes the affair is not without its peculiar features. You see, she misses her husband terribly. She has come to depend greatly upon him, and it is most unfortunate for her that he should be away at this time."

"The *Duc* is still in the West?"

"He is rushing East as fast as special trains will carry him. When his father-in-law died he was miles from anywhere. Carol had an address. It seems he was most considerate of her, and wrote her daily. But it just happened that he was

at this time in the wilds of British Columbia, and the wire that was sent him had to be carried several days' journey by Indian runners. Barring accidents, he will be in New York in less than a week."

"I understand he's very clever," I contributed. "He'll probably scent the crime when he learns all the facts."

"Yes," was Pelham's rejoinder. "He is clever. But I sha'n't wait for his approval. I'm going to dig to the bottom of it myself."

I was burning to ask more questions, yet experience had taught me that my friend was reluctant when pressed. Again he relapsed into a meditative silence, and for a little space I revolved the problem in my own less acutely discerning mind. But before I had gone very far Pelham broke in upon my musing with:

"Carol's attack occurred in the afternoon, after lunching with the Duncan's. She had been lying down, reading, and all at once became conscious that her sight was imperfect. The letters on the page ran together. She had to hold the book closer and closer in order to see at all. In a word, she had suddenly become near-sighted. A little later the other and more alarming symptoms developed, and she had her maid telephone for Barstow."

As a logician I am tenacious rather than alert. Having headed my powers of reasoning in one direction, I forge forward, blind to side-paths and cross-alleys. I was striving now to trace the poisoner and the motive, with no mental eye for the means. But Pelham, keenly penetrative, was on the other tack. Abruptly he straightened in his chair and his handsome face illumined. Then he stood up, and without another word strode from the room as if suddenly electrified.

After waiting for twenty lagging minutes I followed and made inquiries. He had used the telephone. Emerging from the booth, he had gone directly out, entered a taxicab and been driven away.

I did not see him again until the following day at the office, when he apologized for his desertion but made no explanation. On the contrary, he fell to talking of other matters. He was so en-

gaged when a vigorous knocking on the door of his room, which adjoins mine, arrested him. Then, before there was a word or a movement in response, we heard the door opened and footsteps in the next room. Another second and the tall, spare, droop-shouldered figure of Grant Keble was framed above my threshold. Carefully groomed and smartly dressed though he was, dissipation rode unmasked upon his features.

"Morning, Pel, old chap!" was his greeting, waving a gloved hand with a cigarette between the fingers. "Just a word with you."

More than once I had met him, but he chose to ignore me, turning back into my friend's office with a stride that was in itself demanding. In following, Pelham, evidently with purpose, left the door a foot ajar, and the ensuing conversation floated to me through the opening:

"I've just come from Carol," the youth began, a shade of nervousness in his utterance, "and she tells me she's been talking to you about the Governor's sudden taking off and her own little upset. So I thought perhaps I'd better come down here and set you straight. You mustn't imagine a lot of melodramatic rot because of what she told you. There's nothing to it. Absolutely nothing. She's all nervously out of gear since Dad's death, and has got to fancying all sorts of crazy things. She needs the *Duc* to balance her, and I wish to God he was here. Of course there's been nothing the matter with her except that. Nerves, I mean. Nerves of eyes went wrong, maybe, trying to read in the dusk. That frightened her and all the other nerves joined in. Every blessed thing to it, Pel, I assure you."

"You see nothing significant in the co-incidence, then?" my colleague asked.

"Co-incidence? What co-incidence?"

"Similarity of symptoms, for example."

"Of course not. Anyone is liable to indigestion after a hearty luncheon."

Pelham was facing the aperture between the offices at the moment, and I saw a pregnant smile cross his features. Whether or not Grant Keble observed it I do not know; but in the light of sub-

sequent events I am prone to believe that it was that which prompted the youth's next observation.

"To be quite candid, Pel, I don't see why you had to suggest an altogether new line of thought to Carol by borrowing that book last night."

"Did it suggest something to her? I'm sorry."

"I fancy it did. It did to me, anyhow. I know your tendency, old chap. You have a reputation for solving mysteries, and you are always imagining vain things. You'd sniff crime at a christening. But if you are looking for one in this case—and I suspect you are, whether Carol suspects it or not—you are going to have your trouble for your pains. My father's death was altogether natural. Barstow certified to that; and nobody stands higher than Barstow. So you'd better leave it alone. Don't stir things. Don't let the newspapers start something."

"It strikes me," Pelham came back, "that you are taking a lot for granted, dear boy. I am interested in porcelains of the Ming dynasty. I told Carol so. In the first place I merely inquired where your father had obtained the work—whether it was a recent acquisition, or whether it had been in his library for some time, because I wished to get a copy myself. That was in the afternoon. She promised to find out, if possible. I called her up in the evening to learn if she had succeeded. She hadn't, but she offered to lend me the book; so I went up after it. For certain reasons I needed just that work."

"Who told you of the book in the first place?" Grant asked.

"Your sister. She said it was found on the floor of the library after your father's death. She supposed it was his interest in that that caused him to forget his promise to join her at the opera."

"And Carol didn't know where he got it?"

"No," was Pelham's quick answer, followed directly by the question: "Do you?"

For a long moment there was silence, and I would have given something to be able to study young Keble's face while he hesitated. Finally he said:

"It was a present to him."

"You are sure."

"Certainly."

"From whom?"

Again there was a pause, but of less length than the other. It was Pelham, however, who broke it.

"There is certainly no reason why you shouldn't tell, is there? As I said before, I'm anxious to own a copy."

The prod was successful.

"If you must know, I gave it to him," the son admitted.

"Then you can tell me where I can buy a copy."

"No, I can't. The book is very rare. I doubt if there is another copy in this country. I had a friend get it for me."

When Pelham next spoke, his voice had taken on a tone of injury. "Don't you think you might have told me this in the first place, without making me drag it out of you?"

"If you had been any other man I would," was the reply. "The whole reason was that—well, I'd had a quarrel with the poor old Governor a month or two ago over debts. He was very sore about it, and I wanted to win back his favor. I knew he wanted just that book, and I felt if I could get it for him it would square things. Now that's the whole truth."

If there was more conversation it was immaterial. I got the impression, however, that the youth went away satisfied. But this, possibly, was gathered from the talk I had with Pelham after his departure. The matter of the book had greatly interested me and I was quick to question my friend concerning it. But he still held to his assertion that he had been long interested in Ming porcelains. The title of the volume, I learned, was: "*La Porcelaine de Chine*," by O. Du Sarte; it had been published in Paris in 1881.

"Oddly enough," was Pelham's concluding observation, "it was that book, too, which the *Duchesse* was reading when she was attacked."

In the week that followed, my friend entrusted me with no confidences. At times I sought vainly to imagine a connection between the book and the crime he suspected. Indeed, I even went so far

as to look up the matter of colors used in Chinese porcelain decoration, and the pigments employed by lithographers. But my reward was scant. I questioned, too, whether the leaves of the volume could have contained some malefic vapor, the breathing of which would produce death. Yet with no more encouraging result. And I ran over every person in any way connected with the household, in futile search for a possible culprit.

The return of the Duc de Broqueville had meanwhile been featured in the daily papers, but Pelham evidently regarded the fact as unworthy of comment. And then came that afternoon when, riding up town together, our conversation ran almost exclusively to dogs, their dispositions, ailments, and average longevity—the interest lying in the fact that Pelham's English bull, Toby, had of late, at the age of eleven years, developed a vicious temper, and had that very morning rather badly bitten one of the elevator boys at the Loyalton, where we each have a three-room bachelor apartment.

According to wont, we broke our homeward journey at the club, and had barely found seats when my companion was called to the telephone.

"It was Grant Keble," he announced, returning. "He wants that precious book. He's going to call for it to-night at ten, and he's bringing his brother-in-law with him." Then, after a moment's reflection, he added. "Can't you make it convenient to be there, Barry, when I receive them?"

"I shall be only too glad to," was my response.

It is our custom to dress for dinner, but this night we didn't. Two or three congenial chaps joined us; the conversation was prolonged; and we ended by dining there at the club just as we were. Dinner over, Pelham sent the waiter to the kitchen for an English chop, raw, for Toby.

There are more luxurious rooms than Pelham's; but I know of none that so accurately reflect their tenant. Contraries there are in plenty—dignity, method and precision clash with poetic taste, sensuousness and love of ease—yet over all in color, shape and arrangement,



With quivering arms dramatically uplifted, he cried: "For God's sake, be still, can't you? It's not true. You're working the third degree on me."

reigns the positive. Observation with but half an eye must see in them the man of strong will and indomitable force entrenched behind an attractive amiability and litheness of bearing.

As we entered, Toby, chained to an enameled-iron foot of the tub in the bathroom, growled menacingly behind the closed door. I looked to see the chop thrown him; but it went onto a Sèvres

plate in a little glass-doored cupboard beside the chimney-piece instead; and all the beast got at the moment was a sharply toned command to be quiet.

"The brute!" Pelham commented. "He doesn't know my step, any more. He'll be turning on me, next."

Promptly, almost to the minute, the callers kept their appointment. De Broqueville, a trifle undersized as to

stature, yet admirably proportioned, entered first. If to bend slightly forward from the waist with chin held well up is to bow, then the *Duc* may be said to have bowed. I remembered seeing him, twice, I think, at the time of his marriage. But I should hardly have recognized him. His lined cheeks—he was no longer young—wore a sort of leaden pallor, and his small black eyes seemed dully opaque. Grant Keble was flushed with liquor; yet he carried it, save for his heightened color, amazingly well.

Pelham presented me to the Frenchman. He bent once more in the same fashion. Young Keble, who evidently recalled me, simply nodded. There was no shaking of hands on the part of any of us. And in the moment of silence following the introduction, Pelham's dog in the bathroom again growled ominously.

This time the growl went unrebuked. Pelham was busy pushing forward chairs. Of the four of us, he alone seemed free from any overpowering, gripping constraint. Once seated, however, de Broqueville made an energetic effort for extrication. He affected a smile of urbanity, of complacency, and began a voluble chatter, with quick, animated gestures, in which his little fingers played a more lively part even than his hands.

It was evident that he had come with something to say; yet finding the saying difficult, he said everything he could think of but that. Nor did he overcome his hesitancy until the more stimulated Grant Keble came to his assistance.

"If you've quite finished with the Du Sartel book, Pel," he suggested, "Carol would like to have it."

At this, Pelham's expressive blue-gray eyes took on a look of calm amusement. His reply, leisurely spoken, was in effect dynamic.

"Yes," he said, "I've about finished with it, but it's hardly in a condition to return. I had to cut out some of the pages."

Keble was on his feet in an instant, his face flaming.

"By the gods!" he cried, his voice high with anger. "That's what I call damnable presumption. Didn't I tell you

that it's practically impossible to replace that book? Interest in Ming porcelains! A trick, eh! What are you trying to get at anyhow? What under heaven is your object? Have you gone crazy on this crime thing? You dared to cut up the book, did you? Then tell me why? There isn't the shadow of an excuse for you."

Pelham sat unmoved throughout the tirade. Then, very quietly, he asked:

"Would you regard proof that your father died of poison as some small excuse?"

The youth paused, staring. Pelham's gravity seemed forcing his conviction.

"Poison!" he repeated, the word little more than a whisper, and it seemed to me that his surprise was hardly in keeping with our knowledge that this was not the first time he had heard the suggestion. "Proof!"

Pelham merely nodded.

Then abruptly the young man appeared to recover himself, though I noticed that his hands were working nervously, tensing and relaxing by turns.

"Taken in error, you mean?" was his suggestion.

"In error for what?" my colleague shot back.

Before he could answer, the *Duc* supplied a response.

"For bromides," he said, quietly. "You may not know that my father-in-law was addicted to bromides and took them in powder form."

With lean, virile hand Pelham swept back from his brow a drooping lock of shining brown hair.

"I see! I see!" he exclaimed. "As he read, he took a powder which he thought was a sedative. Some flakes dropped upon his book. But it was not what he thought. It was—what?" He flung the question precipitately at de Broqueville, who calmly shrugged.

"Me? How shall I say? I do not know."

Abruptly Pelham rose.

"I do," he said sharply. "I found some of it."

Quickly I glanced from one caller to the other. Grant Keble's flush had changed to a chalky pallor. "My God!" he breathed. De Broqueville appeared unmoved.

"I fancied so," he said.

It may have been his master's stirring, the faint echo of his step upon the rugged floor, that roused the chained

beast again. For the third time Toby's growl rumbled from beyond the adjoining bedchamber and the closed bathroom door.



All in vain were the *Duc's* efforts to hold back. Pelham forced him before him into the bedchamber; and reaching beyond him, snatched open the bathroom door.

From the little cupboard beside the chimney-piece Pelham had taken down the Sèvres plate. But as he turned I saw that in his other hand was something else—a wide-mouthed glass jar, to which, the next instant, he was calling our attention.

"This," he explained, "contains some cuttings from the leaves of '*La Porcelaine de Chine*,' upon which I poured a teacupful of clear water." And as he held it up, the printed text was plainly visible through the glass. "It may interest you to see what effect it will have upon the dog yonder." With which, he emptied possibly an ounce of the fluid over the chop.

Grant Keble followed him to the bathroom. But de Broqueville did not so much as rise from his chair. With an air of indifference he unpocketed a jeweled cigarette case and invited me to join him in smoking. Personally, I had no stomach for witnessing the senile Toby's execution, and had merely risen and strolled over to a standing position before the fireplace in which a gas-log was bluely aflame. Accepting the cigarette, I thanked him; but beyond that no words passed between us. In truth I was on nervous edge; for it seemed to me that the volunteered explanation of error was very far from adequate. How virulent indeed must be a poison, a few spilled grains of which could produce alarming symptoms in the *Duchesse*, who merely glanced over the pages, and still in solution be counted upon to snuff out the life of a dog!

I heard the beast snarl viciously as the door of the bathroom opened, and its chain jangle as it leaped to the length of it. The next moment the door slammed and Pelham and Grant Keble rejoined us. The boy was silent, but his lip, I saw, was a-quiver, and his hands now were spasmodically twitching.

"Five minutes should be ample, but we'll allow ten," Pelham observed casually. "It isn't a very familiar poison, you know."

No one made any response. The clock on the mantel shelf seemed suddenly to have found a louder voice. It began ticking sonorously against the room's pregnant stillness.

Unflurried, Pelham, the one dominant figure in the somewhat bizarre little parlor, went on in his easy matter-of-fact fashion.

"I really, you know, can't imagine how Mr. Keble should have come by such a little-used drug. The average apothecary rarely carries more than five grains of it. It's principal use is in eye prescriptions. It is seldom called for, and only in minute quantity even for such a purpose."

De Broqueville continued nonchalantly to smoke his cigarette, inhaling deeply. Grant Keble walked to a window, drew aside the curtains and gazed out into the night's murk. My eyes were on the clock. The minutes dragged weefully.

"A very little, taken up by the mucous membrane of the eye, not only contracts the pupil to blindness, but causes abdominal pains and nausea. Death usually results from the drug's paralyzing effect on the respiratory muscles." Pelham had dropped into a chair, and was calmly matching his finger tips.

Young Keble, to drown the clock's clamorous ticking, I fancied, began nervously drumming on the pane.

"The *Duchesse*," the speaker went on, "in turning the book's pages, evidently got some of the poison on her fingers. Then she rubbed her eyes. But with Mr. Keble it was different. His fingers touched his lips—probably his tongue. The poison entered his system by mouth. His habit of invariably wetting his finger to turn a page was the death of him."

It was then that the dead man's son wheeled sharply about. He seemed in one bound to leap to the stage's center, confronting the calmly recumbent Pelham. And with quivering arms dramatically uplifted, he cried:

"For God's sake, be still, can't you? It's not true. You're working the third degree on me. There was no poison in the book. There couldn't have been. And if there's any poison in that stuff you gave the dog, you put it there. You're like all the rest of them, I know: it's a touch. You want money. You—"

His voice, rising from the first sentence, shrilled and broke and trailed. He staggered back, drunkenly, catching at a

table, only to send it spinning. Then I caught him in my arms and dropped him, shuddering, into the chair I had quitted.

If Pelham resented the charge so passionately made, he gave no sign. On the contrary, it seemed to me that I detected a tolerant smile on his handsome face.

The *Duc* rose nimbly, with sudden impulse, dropping his glowing cigarette into a convenient receiver.

"We had best be going," he said suavely. "Granted your dog dies, it proves—what? In the making of the paper, there may have been a poison used. Who can tell? You do not wish, I am sure, to imply that it could have been placed there with purpose. That is inconceivable." His leaden mask seemed to grin at me for confirmation. Then he continued: "I regret exceedingly that Grant should have lost his self-control. And I desire to thank you, my dear Mr. Pelham, for your disinterested concern in the matter. You are entitled to reward. And you shall, I promise you, be—"

He got no further. Pelham, at the first suggestion of this proposed bribery, was on his feet, his eyes blazing.

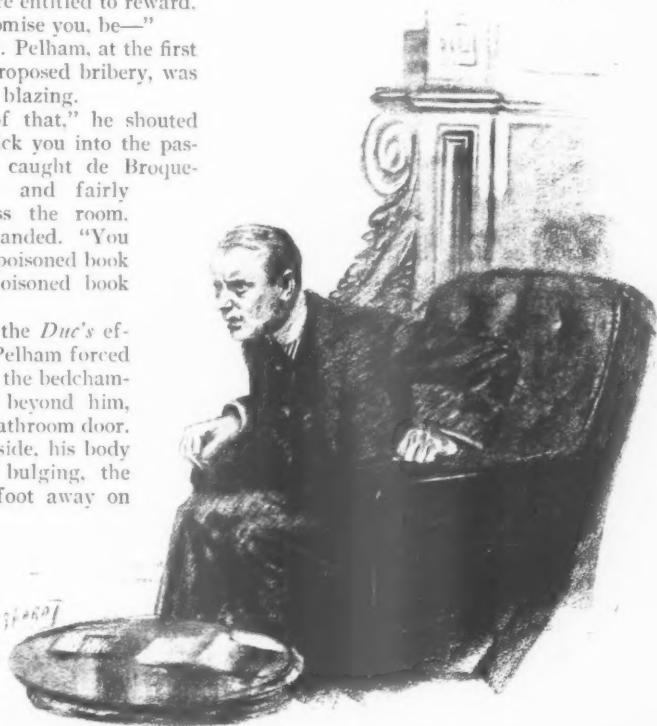
"Another word of that," he shouted angrily, "and I'll kick you into the passage." Roughly he caught de Broqueville by the arm, and fairly dragged him across the room. "Come!" he commanded. "You shall see what that poisoned book—that purposely poisoned book—has done!"

All in vain were the *Duc's* efforts to hold back. Pelham forced him before him into the bedchamber; and reaching beyond him, snatched open the bathroom door. Toby lay upon his side, his body distorted, his eyes bulging, the half-eaten chop a foot away on the white tiled floor, the Sèvres plate broken in half.

"Look at the dead brute!" he ordered sharply. "It was just so that John Keble died.

But you've seen deaths of the same sort before, I remember. I said the poison was little called for here. Few know of it. But you know it well, de Broqueville. You saw it used in West Africa. We call it *physostigmine* or *eserine*. There, it's the calabar bean. Maybe you'll be able to explain the co-incidence. But I don't believe so. Nevertheless, I'll give you twenty-four hours to think it over." His utterance was keen as a blade, but his tone was low and tense. I, who had followed close, caught every word, but I question that Grant Keble, lolling hunched in the chair where I had dropped him, caught a single syllable.

The *Duc*, fuming, ventured no retort. As Pelham's grip released him, he drew from his cuff a handkerchief and spitefully flecked his coatsleeve where the other's hand had clutched him. Then he



Keble's face changed to a ghastly pallor. "My God!" he breathed

strode past me and spoke a word in French to the confused Grant, who responded dazedly.

When Pelham and I, after a minute's purposeful delay, returned to the little parlor, both men were gone.

The rush of events, ending in disclosure, had left me bewildered. Not that I had not felt from the first that the stage was set for the villain's discomfiting. I had felt this, and had watched, as I thought, the forging of the shackles for Grant Keble. But the swift change of parts was dumfounding.

My perplexity must have been apparent, for I caught Pelham's amused regard. Whereupon he rescued me; and I learned that two elements of personal equipment had contributed to the overthrow of falsehood and the establishment of truth: his own retentive memory and the Keble butler's faculty for order.

"When de Broqueville was over here for his wedding, three years ago, he delighted to entertain us with stories of his African experiences." In this wise he began as he set upon his center table a decanter of Scotch, a siphon and glasses. "One of these in particular interested me. It had to do with a method of trial amongst the natives. To the accused savage was given an emulsion made from the calabar bean. In case of innocence the prisoner survived. If he chanced to be guilty he died. But some of the more wily of the tribesmen knew a thing or two. They knew, for example, that if they took an overdose of the stuff they would throw it off, and their innocence would thus be established. But the less knowing, taking but a little, invariably died in agony.

"In looking up poisons for which beladonna is an antidote, I found the calabar bean in the list. And then this narrative of the *Duc's* recurred to me. Later, other discoveries fitted in. The Keble butler is a methodical person. He preserves the wrapping paper that comes about parcels. At my request he produced that which enclosed the present from Grant to his father. It bore two addresses—one on either side. It had been expressed to Grant from San Francisco, where de Broqueville happened to be, I ascertained, at about the time of its dis-

patch. Grant had simply unwrapped it, inserted a note or a card, probably, and then done it up in the same paper wrong side out. His peace-offering had been picked up, at his request, by de Broqueville, somewhere in the West."

"But the motive?" I questioned.

"I'll tell you," Pelham interrupted. "He is sorely in need of big money. In emulation of his father-in-law he, together with other of his titled countrymen, has been endeavoring to combine a number of mining corporations. The effect has not been successful, and for lack of additional capital they are on the brink of ruin. Carol's inheritance would save them. And to hasten that evidently appeared to the *Duc* very easy."

I noted one of those fleeting lights of amusement that are not quite smiles, so characteristic of my friend.

"You see what an impression that vulgar habit of poor Keble's made on de Broqueville. He knew his father-in-law couldn't turn a page without moistening his finger at his lips. That made this method of poisoning sure."

"Still, he took big chances," I declared. "See how nearly he came to catching his wife in the same trap."

"He probably overlooked the drug's action on the eyes. Then too, he must have argued that the book would hold little interest for anyone not a connoisseur; and that after doing its work he would have ample opportunity to spirit it out of the Keble library."

That Pelham had allowed the culprit twenty-four hours to escape appeared to me a laxity of duty under the circumstances.

"Escape!" he repeated. "I have let him go, it is true. But I have shown him the net. I fancy he will understand that there is but one way to escape it."

Our eyes met across the table, and his meaning flashed clear to me. Under the net's first shadowy looming the Frenchman had, squirming, turned to his god—the great god gold—to lift the gate and open the road. But his deity, stripped of power by virtue, deserted him. Now, indeed, there was but one way, and de Broqueville took it.

Before dawn, Caroline, *Duchesse de Broqueville*, was a widow.



A RETURN TO SAM

MR. BOYNTON HICKS JOURNEYS
INTO ONE OF HIS POSSESSIONS

By CLIFFORD S. RAYMOND

Author of "A Change of Beer," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY H. J. MOWAT

BEFORE there was a Mrs. Boynton Hicks, Mr. Boynton Hicks had been Sam B. Hicks. Occasionally, he still was Sam B. Hicks in spite of Mrs. Boynton Hicks, and things that could not happen to Boynton Hicks had a way of happening to Sam Hicks.

Mr. Hicks was that fabled creature, a merchant prince. His grandfather had kept a general store at a cross roads. His father had established a dry goods store in a small town. Mr. Hicks was a merchant prince.

His mother's name was Boynton, for which Mrs. Sam B. Hicks was grateful. Mr. Hicks became Boynton Hicks and finally ceased to rebel. For a while he signed himself B. Hicks, but in the end Mrs. Hicks had her way: Sam was completely forgotten and B. Hicks became Boynton Hicks.

Mrs. Hicks was a personage and a wonderful woman. Mr. Hicks admired her for her fight against Sam and the

corner-store habits of the Hicks family. Mr. Hicks' ideas of sociability were his grandfather's. He had the same liking for hog and hominy. He would sooner sit by a stove in a country store than in a box at the opera, but his opportunities forced much opera on him and offered him no stoves. Mrs. Hicks saw frequently that Mr. Hicks' demeanor confessed a sorrow which she understood and hoped no one else perceived. She admired Boynton Hicks. He was a shaggy-haired animal but he had power and men of distinction regarded him highly.

Occasionally when Mrs. Hicks was away from home Mr. Hicks took a day off, ceased to be Boynton Hicks and became Sam Hicks.

On such a day as this, and a bitter cold one in mid-winter, an unprepossessing gentleman came, for purposes not his own, to Mr. Hicks' front door. If it had been for purposes of his own the gentleman, if he had come at all, would

have hunted out a back area-way where goods were delivered.

Mr. Hicks' house was quite the most imposing place on quite the most imposing street, and the unprepossessing gentleman was achieving something remarkable in a life much given to mooching when he, for purposes not his own, walked up to Mr. Hicks' front door.

Mr. Hicks came quite naturally by a neighborly habit of going to the door himself when the bell rang. It was something he had no courage for when Mrs. Hicks was at home and it was something—when the bell was rung by persons observable from a convenient window as people of fashion—the butler had prevented him from doing on occasions of Mrs. Hicks' absence. Neither Mr. Hicks nor the butler had any fear of each other, which was a testimony to both.

Mr. Hicks, when he could, answered the door-bell himself, and usually he was in his shirt sleeves. As the gentleman, governed by other purposes than his own, came to the imposing front door of Mr. Hicks' imposing residence, Mr. Hicks was thus in his shirt sleeves and his butler was not near by. Mr. Hicks answered the bell. His hope was that he had demoralized the butler and was about to receive a person of fashion.

This malignancy received a set-back, and Mr. Hicks opened the door to the gentleman strangely governed by other purposes than his own.

"Say, friend," said the gentleman, "could you help a man out of a job to a bit of food and the price of a bed?"

The gentleman had begun a professional chant without giving Mr. Hicks the personal observation he deserved. When he did so observe him the glibness of his recitation ceased abruptly. The gentleman knew certain aspects of human nature and he could particularize as nicely and precisely as any man in the world when it became necessary.

Mr. Hicks made it necessary.

"It's a cold day," said the gentleman, all his professional recitation gone, "and I've been trying to get off the street."

Mr. Hicks was considering his choice of two luxuries. One was to take his sturdy beggar by the shoulders, turn him

around and leisurely kick him along the walk to the front gate regardless of the butler. The other was to have him in the house and give him a drink.

"Come in," said Mr. Hicks, thereby reaching a decision not altogether humane, inasmuch as it reserved rather than abandoned the kicking pleasure. That might come later.

The gentleman edged away.

"I'll be going," he said.

"Come in," said Mr. Hicks, and there was such a habit of obeyed authority in his voice that the reluctant gentleman responded instinctively.

"Come in and have a drink."

Mr. Hicks indeed was taking a day off and his name was Sam.

Outside, and uncomfortably outside the Hicks' residence, Mr. Thomas Tupper, a reporter for the *Chronicle*, and the person furnishing the purpose which carried the sturdy beggar to Mr. Hicks' front door, stood stamping in the creaking snow. Mr. Tupper thought he was freezing to death by inches.

Mr. Tupper's assignment was to ascertain how the idle rich responded to the appeal of charity on an uncharitably cold day, and Mr. Tupper had five dollars and a suit of heavy underwear invested in the gentleman whom he had coaxed with difficulty from a radiator in The Palace Flop and who had disappeared.

Mr. Tupper, resenting beyond words the assignment which had set him at such work, had endeavored to achieve a certain revenge by setting his beggar directly at the doors of such of the elect as were on the very best terms with the editor and publisher of his great family journal. This, he thought, would be too neat for explication and he had been jocose when he instructed Mr. Jacobs—the gentleman had said his name was Williams, Atkinson and Jacobs all within ten minutes of conversation preliminary to the contract—to enter the gateway to the Hicks' residence.

"Don't be gone long," Mr. Tupper had said, sending Mr. Jacobs within. "Remember while you are luxuriating with the idle rich I'm freezing outside here."



Mr. Hicks was considering his choice of two luxuries. One was to kick the beggar to the front gate. The other was to invite him in the house and give him a drink.

This jocosity had pleased Mr. Tupper but it did not keep him warm, and after Mr. Jacobs had been gone ten minutes Mr. Tupper became the victim of doubt as well as chill, believing that Mr. Jacobs must have circled the Hicks' residence, hopped a fence and gone running for the comforts of a steam-heated flop.

To the extent of five dollars and a suit of heavy woollens, Mr. Tupper had a proprietary interest in Mr. Jacobs, and although as a political theorist he was

communistic he had profound respect for his own property and chattels. He also was a determined person, and with his suspicions and fears aroused he went determinedly in search of Mr. Jacobs. Neither proletariat nor plutocrat could abscond with five dollars and a suit of heavy woollens without accounting to Mr. Tupper. If Mr. Hicks had Mr. Jacobs he would be held to an accounting. If Mr. Jacobs had taken off over a back fence Mr. Tupper would pursue him to the uttermost flop.

Mr. Hicks beat the butler to the door by two feet. The butler had scruples against running—while Mr. Hicks, when he wanted to achieve any purpose, was superior to scruple. Therefore it was Mr. Hicks again who opened the door and the butler showed a face of chagrin only half masked in hauteur over Mr. Hicks' shoulder.

"Well, what do you want?" Mr. Hicks asked of Mr. Tupper.

"I want that man I sent in here."

"You sent him in, did you?"

"I sent him, I don't know whether he came or not."

Mr. Jacobs appeared in the hall behind the butler.

"That's a friend of mine," said Mr. Jacobs. "He's a good fellow. Let him in."

"If he says you're all right, come in," said Mr. Hicks.

Mr. Jacobs, his mediation successful, wheeled around and returned rapidly whence he had come—as a man who had sacrificed important time to friendship. Mr. Hicks led Mr. Tupper more leisurely in Mr. Jacobs' disturbed wake, and they found that hurried gentleman in the dining-room, already engaged with half a cold chicken and a bottle of champagne.

"What'll you have?" asked Mr. Hicks.

Mr. Tupper's fancy, bitterly socialistic, took instant stock of the wine cellars and opportunities of the idle rich.

"Bourbon," he said.

"Take wine," Mr. Jacobs urged.

"Have some wine," Mr. Hicks suggested.

"Bourbon, thank you," said Mr. Tupper.

Mr. Hicks looked at him with approval and had Bourbon himself.

"What did you send this man in here for?" he asked.

"To find out what you'd do to him," said Mr. Tupper.

Mr. Hicks' perceptions were not dull, even on a day off.

"You're a reporter," he said. Mr. Tupper acknowledged himself identified.

"If you had said wine I think I'd ask you to go," said Mr. Hicks.

"I didn't come to visit," said Mr. Tupper, preserving his status. "I came to get Mr. Jacobs."

"This fellow? He said his name was Jones."

"It's DeVere," said Mr. Jacobs.

"It will be the Duke of Bilgewater with another bottle," said Mr. Tupper. "You have destroyed his moral sense. He was a self-respecting member of the proletariat when I sent him in here."

"Don't give me any of that Socialist cant," said Mr. Hicks. "This fellow's been telling me a lot of Socialist rot about cubic air space in the Palace Flop. Do you know I own it?"

"I'm prepared to learn that you do."

"Why?" Mr. Hicks asked abruptly.

"Our best people are not particular what they own."

"We are wage slaves," Mr. Jacobs exclaimed. "The flop's a fire trap."

"I didn't say I ran it," Mr. Hicks continued. "I said I owned it. I never saw it. The man says it's dangerous."

"Doesn't your insurance rate tell you that?" Mr. Tupper inquired. "The last man that knows anything about a piece of property is the proprietor."

"You're a child," said Mr. Hicks. "I own the place and that's all I know about it."

"It wouldn't pay you to know more," Mr. Jacobs advised. "Your wine's better than they've got at the flop and you have a better view up here. Not knocking the flop, at that. Once when I couldn't get a nickel for a set-up it looked like Buckingham Palace. It's better than burning the street."

"Than what?" Mr. Hicks asked.

"Burning the street. When they're thawing out the street to dig up the gas mains the foreman sometimes will let you get warm, but that aint sleeping. I put six newspapers inside my clothes and laid down on a grating this time I'm telling you of, and a good deal of heat came up from the engine room, but I'm no waffle and even if the engineer hadn't turned the hose on me I'd rather had a set-up in the Palace if I couldn't get a flop."

"A what?" asked Mr. Hicks.

"A set-up," said Mr. Jacobs impatiently. "A place to set up."

"Always dissatisfied and grumbling, aren't you, Jacobs?" said Mr. Tupper. "It's their radicalism. Showing their

class prejudices and discontent. You weren't grateful for a bed on a warm grating but you had to have a set-up in Hicks' Flop. I suppose you blamed Mr. Hicks because you couldn't get a nickel. You're an Anarchist, Jacobs. Doesn't religion teach you anything?"

"I'm not an Anarchist. I'm a Socialist. Ministers are no good."

"How do you know?" asked Mr. Hicks.

"I had a set-up in the St. James mission one winter and the white choker fired me. He said I stole a Bible."

The memory of this ancient injustice held Mr. Jacobs bitterly for an instant.

"It was only a dinky hymnal," he added.

"Things are only relative," said Mr. Tupper with bourbonic wisdom. "Hicks' Flop is the Palace of the poor and downtrodden, the profit of the malevolent rich and the pest of the average man."

"You may cut out that Hicks' Flop," said Mr. Hicks to Mr. Tupper.

"It's yours, isn't it?" asked Mr. Tupper.

"Never mind whose it is. Let it go at the Palace Flop."

"I'm a member of the leisure class," said Mr. Jacobs. "How about another bottle."

Mr. Jacobs had another bottle and Mr. Hicks pushed the decanter of whisky towards Mr. Tupper and Mr. Tupper presently pushed it back. It was pushed back and forth a number of times and that probably was the reason Mr. Hicks decided that the only business of importance he had before him was to take Mr. Tupper and Mr. Jacobs down town to dinner and after that to inspect the Palace Flop.

When Mr. Hicks' automobile came to the curb in front of the Palace Flop, Mr. Jacobs, ordinarily of Carthusian habit, was as full of food and drink as any Dives. Mr. Jacobs had been among the Persians and he did not hate them. Mr. Jacobs was a Sybarite and he knew the numbers of two vintage wines and he knew the anatomy of an artichoke. Mr. Jacobs knew that the ways of wealth were pleasant ways and he was ready to burst into song with an un-Socialistic voice.

Across the street from the Palace Flop was the Workingman's Exchange, out of which a gentleman, obviously one of the working men, emerged rapidly, having a two-foot start of the bouncer and being desirous of maintaining it. He was without his hat and in great distress of speed, but he saw the automobile and, inspired, continued across the street as if his objective had been determined when he started flight.

He had obtained a dollar from Mr. Hicks before the door of the automobile had been opened. Thereupon he recrossed the street with a dignity oblivious to the shouts of "You're a bum, you're a bum," which Mr. Jacobs energetically sent after him and reentered the Workingman's Exchange, secure in his new importance.

Mr. Jacobs, exalted although not sure of himself, led Mr. Tupper and Mr. Hicks up a flight of stairs to the office of the Palace Flop.

The clerk observed them with hostility and the fifty or more men in the large room looked at them curiously. Mr. Jacobs presented Mr. Tupper and Mr. Hicks to the clerk.

"These are my friends," said Mr. Jacobs. "This is the man who owns the Flop. This is the man who owns the *Morning War Cry*. This is the man who runs the Flop."

When Mr. Jacobs had made these presentations he said:

"I am not a Socialist. I have joined the capitalistic class. I am a grinder and a tramper. It's a hard winter. I've joined the Capitalists. I've enlisted for three months. For ten dollars I'd enlist for the war."

Mr. Jacobs did not pause to discover if these remarks were received with the attention due an important declaration but went immediately to a chair, sat down and passed away in sleep.

"What is this?" the clerk asked sourly. "The Visitation and Aid Society? If it is, you came in the wrong door. Two doors south or three west. Git out."

Mr. Hicks looked at the clerk as if such belligerence amused him.

"My name's Hicks," he said. "I own this place. I want to look it over. Come with me and show me over it."

"Oh, you own it, do you," said the clerk. "I thought that guy over there that's gone to sleep owned it. Brace yourself against the counter to stand a shock. My name's Brown. There you've got it. You've read about me in the newspapers. Git out of here. What are you looking for? Illegal registration? There aint an election for nine months. Git out."

"I tell you my name's Hicks."

"And I tell you my name's Brown."

"I own this place."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself. I run it—at night."

"Look here, my man. You wont be running it if you don't watch out. I tell you my name is Hicks."

The clerk suddenly smiled and was pleasant. He leaned over the desk.

"Sam Hicks?"

Mr. Hicks started perceptibly.

"Because," said the clerk, "if you're Sam Hicks, it's all right, of course. What kind of a room do you and your friends want, Sam? Five, ten or fifteen cents? Would you like to have your pants pressed? Will you leave a call? I can give you a nice clean board for ten cents or a mattress for fifteen."

"You called me Sam," said Mr. Hicks.

"I should have said Samuel."

"Now wait a minute. About a half dozen people know that my name used to be Sam. How did you know?"

"Samuel," said the clerk. "is written all over your fine, honest face."

Mr. Hicks turned away.

"Of course," said the clerk, "if you are really curious I might say that an old fellow who rooms here says he worked for Sam Hicks thirty years ago when it was McCloud and Hicks and that he used to know Sam back in Vermont. He talks a good deal of Sam."

"Is he here now?"

"Over there asleep in the chair nearest that radiator in the corner."

"I'll get him," said Mr. Tupper.

A shaky old man was aroused from a rocking chair in which he was dozing. "Who wants me?" he asked.

His hair was white, his cheeks sunken; his hands were thin and showed large veins and he twitched as Mr. Tupper took him by the arm and led him towards Mr. Hicks.

"Man here wants to see you," said Mr. Tupper.

"I haven't got any," said the old man to Mr. Tupper's complete understanding. "I've been in a hellish state."

"I understand you know me," said Mr. Hicks to the shaky old man.

"I don't know you," said the old man.

"Sure, you know Sam," the clerk suggested.

"Sam who?" the shaky old man asked.

"I don't know him."

"This fellow here said you knew me. My name's Hicks."

"Hicks that used to be of McCloud and Hicks?"

"Yes."

"Then I do know you. If you're Sam Hicks, I was your silk buyer. That's the truth. My name's Dongan. I was your silk buyer."

"We used to have a man named Dongan," said Mr. Hicks, "but he never knew me in Vermont."

"Neither did I, but there was no harm in saying I did, and I *was* your silk buyer."

"Well, Dongan, what put you in here?"

Mr. Dongan raised his thin hands helplessly.

"Sickness," he said, "and deaths and losses and cocaine."

"Come over here, Dongan. I want to talk to you."

Mr. Hicks led Mr. Dongan to a chair.

"Nice little comedy, isn't it?" said the clerk to Mr. Tupper. "Who are you? Mr. Rockefeller?"

"No," said Mr. Tupper. "I'm Jay Gould."

"So you are, so you are. You've been dead so long. That's why I didn't recognize you."

Mr. Hicks' chauffeur, coming up the steps, entered the office, looked around, saw Mr. Tupper, recognized him as one of Mr. Hicks strange guests and approached him.

"It's cold," he said. "I thought I would come up and get warm."

The clerk looked at the chauffeur questioningly. He had not connected Mr. Hicks, Mr. Tupper and Mr. Jacobs with anything so important in a locomotive way as an automobile.

"Hey, you," said the clerk, "who are you with?"

"Mr. Hicks," said the man.

The man looked at the chauffeur as if he were a most extraordinary chauffeur, then looked towards Mr. Hicks and said:

"Oh, well, I guess there are other jobs."

Thereupon he rolled himself a cigarette and became meditative, while Mr. Tupper waited upon the conclusion of Mr. Hicks' conversation with the old man. It was not long. Presently Mr. Hicks arose.

"Come and see me to-morrow, Dongan," he said. "Wait a minute, I'll make it easy for you."

Mr. Hicks took out his cards and on one wrote:

Let this fellow in to see me whenever he comes.

"That'll get you out of the hands of some superserviceable fellow who might not even let you in the dog pound. Good night, Dongan."

"Do you want to look the place over?" the clerk asked as Mr. Hicks came to the desk again. He hadn't hauled down his colors. He merely saluted the admiral of his fleet.

"Not now. I'll do that to-morrow," said Mr. Hicks.

"I may not be here to-morrow."

Mr. Hicks seemed to consider this probability for a moment.

"I don't know," he said, "but I think you may if you want to be."

Mr. Hicks looked at the clerk as if to estimate the number of his shoes and the size of his hat and then he looked around the large office with its groups of men.

"What's your opinion of these fellows?" he asked. "Is this sort of thing what's coming to them or are they getting the worst of it because they're down and out? Take that old fellow, Dongan, there. He was a decent, clean, live man once and did his work well. Now when he's gone to pieces he's up against this. He was a faithful fellow and this is what he gets. How about it?"

"Well, what do you mean?" asked the clerk. "They've got what they made.

Who's going to furnish them gold spoons now? What's the idea?"

"Aren't they paying for more than they're getting here? Couldn't you give these men something like a decent place to live and make a profit?"

"You ought to know; you own the place."

"I'm asking you."

"The place isn't so bad. It'll burn down some night but I guess we'll get most of them out. And nobody'll pay much attention to the rest of them. If the wrong kind of a health inspector comes around you'll have more windows and fewer rooms, but it isn't so bad. It looks pretty good to a guy on a night like this."

"You come around and see me to-morrow, too," said Mr. Hicks. "I'm not a sentimental man, but old Dongan's got my goat. I can make a business proposition out of something you can run without depending on the right kind of a health inspector."

Mr. Hicks looked at his watch and said: "Come along, Tupper."

At the door Dongan stopped him and crowded close to Mr. Hicks, holding out his hand and speaking in a low voice which evidently was choked with emotion.

"That's all right, Dongan," said Mr. Hicks. "Don't thank me. I haven't done anything for you yet, but I will. That's all right. Come and see me."

He went hurriedly down the stairs to escape the grateful Dongan.

Well outside the five- and ten-cent flop district Mr. Hicks and Mr. Tupper had a farewell drink. Mr. Hicks reached for his watch. Mr. Hicks brought all interviews, meetings, gatherings and assemblages, of whatsoever nature, in which he took part, to an end by looking at his watch. Mrs. Hicks had surrendered to this one habit of the original Sam Hicks. Mr. Hicks timed even his dinner guests from his table.

Mr. Hicks reached for his watch. Then he looked at Mr. Tupper as if comprehension were lost in astonishment.

"Where could I have lost that?" he exclaimed.

"What?"

"My watch. I've been touched."

"Dongan," said Mr. Tupper, comprehending. "Pickpocket and dope fiend."

"Nonsense," said Mr. Hicks. "That

"It was Dongan, all right," said Mr. Tupper. "No one else had a chance."

"By hek," said Mr. Hicks. "I remem-



Mr. Hicks reached for his watch. Then he looked at Mr. Tupper as if comprehension were lost in amazement.

would be crazy. I told him I'd put him on his feet. He cried when he tried to thank me."

ber I looked at it just as I was leaving the desk and before he came to the door and cried."

"Dope," said Mr. Tupper.

"Tupper, I suppose you're going to write a lot about this, but let the old man off. I'll do something for him yet. I'll get the watch back. Let him alone."

"It's a good story," said Mr. Tupper.

"Let the old man off," Mr. Hicks urged.

"Well," said Mr. Tupper, "I guess you've got something coming to you. It spoils the story, but all right."

As Mr. Tupper entered the local room of the *Chronicle* he observed that he was regarded as a brand snatched from the burning, but he did not care. Mr. Tupper, hours overdue and unheard from, had a "story," and he hushed the first angry exclamations from the city editor by outlining it in part. The city editor stopped him.

"That old man over there talking to Williams," he said, "came in about five minutes ago with a tip about Hicks inspecting the Palace Flop. He wanted ten dollars for it and I told him he could have it if the story could be verified. Williams is just starting work."

Mr. Tupper looked down the line of typewriter desks. Mr. Dongan was talking to Mr. Williams.

Mr. Tupper then astonished the local room by walking softly towards Mr. Williams' desk, clutching the shaky old man suddenly and commanding Mr. Williams to search him.

The shaky old man screamed and swore but Mr. Tupper held him and Mr. Williams drew a gold watch from a pocket in his shabby trousers while the men in the local room crowded up to them.

"For the love of Mike, Dongan," said the astonishing Mr. Tupper, holding the watch up before the sniveling and shaking old man, "what did you do a thing like that for when he was trying to help you?"

The old man was exhausted and his twitchings were painful and pitiful. He looked at Mr. Tupper hopelessly.

"My Gawd," he cried. "Who can help me? What help is there for me? He wants me to do something I can't. I helped myself. Help me? My Gawd, what a joke!"

The shaky old man shook still more. The local room was intent but silent.

"Mr. Phelps," said Mr. Tupper to the city editor, "the best thing you can do is to lock him in the library so he can't tip the story off to another paper. And the kindest thing you can do is to telephone Doc Megrane and ask him if he wont come over and give the old man a shot of dope. And, Dongan, *he'll* not know where his watch was. I'll get it back to him and you see him to-morrow. He's a pretty live man. He may be able to help you."

"Help me! My Gawd, what a joke!" said Mr. Dongan, but he made no protest and shuffled after his custodians to the library.

"It's worth three columns," said Mr. Tupper to the city editor. "May I have it?"

"Write as much as you want to," said the city editor. "but write it quick."

Mr. Tupper, with sure journalistic instinct, thought of *Haroun-al-Raschid* for his first paragraph and set to work on his typewriter.

The Next COUNT SAROS Story Through a delay in the transmission

from England of the illustrations by Frank Craig, the foremost magazine painter in England, for "The Three Vultures," it will be impossible to present that story by L. J. Beeston until the April issue. But you who have read the first three exploits of the gallant SAROS may rest assured it is well worth the wait.

The Previous Chapters of "What Will People Say?"

PERSIS CABOT, member of an exclusive circle in New York, is the dominant figure of this powerful story of society life in New York. She is born and bred to our metropolitan maxim, "What will people say?" Her world considers being found out the only unforgivable sin.

In constant attendance on Persis is "Little Willie" Enslee, an insignificant weakling but heir to enormous estates. Persis is secretly engaged to him, as her father is in constant business trouble and she wants to be prepared to "get aboard the ark" in case of financial deluge. Then suddenly, Lieutenant Harvey Forbes, U. S. A., a handsome Southerner, comes into her life.

Forbes is just home from fighting Moros. He is introduced by Murray Ten Eyck, a Knickerbocker of fashion. At first Forbes looks on society display with disgust. He thinks of the constant parade of luxuriously dressed women: "All these women are paid for by men. What do the women pay?" He is contemptuous of their fragile appearance—but he is to learn they are capable of making or breaking the lives of strong men.

Forbes becomes fascinated by Persis and follows her about to the different cafés where society folk turkey-trot. He learns the dance and is in a rapture when Persis is his partner. Ten Eyck warns Forbes not to fall in love with Persis if he isn't a millionaire. Forbes has only his army pay of two thousand a year, but he doesn't heed. Everywhere he hears Persis' name linked with Enslee's. Even Mrs. Neff, dictator of this "set," expects Persis to marry Enslee without loving him, just as she expects to force her daughter Alice, who loves young and impecunious Stowe Webb, to marry the elderly Senator Tait.

Forbes gives a luncheon for Persis' party at the Ritz-Carleton. He is dazed at the cost. While they are eating, Enslee declares he is going to take a day to run up to his country place, which is not yet opened. Winifred Mather, a substantial beauty always in the party, exclaims that they will all go along. And so a servantless house-party is arranged.

Forbes decides to win Persis. He goes to Enslee's house-party, where his host's stately mansion and mag-

nificent estates—Enslee's strongest fighting weapons—will be arrayed against him. The first morning there, Persis slips out with him and they roam while he tells his love. Persis keeps him at arm's length, because she is afraid of what the people at the house will say if some one peeps through the blinds. That day Enslee urges Persis to marry him at once. She refuses and meets Forbes again late that night for a walk, and tells him she loves him.

The following day, Forbes tells Persis of his poverty and begs her to marry him. The girl is stunned at finding he has only what to her is a good chauffeur's salary, and tells him she cannot. That evening Enslee announces their engagement and tells the party it is of long standing. Forbes shows how deeply he is wounded, and Persis offers to explain. So they go into a dark, unopened parlor, after the others have gone to bed. Persis confesses she is willing to sell herself to Enslee for what he can give her.

When the party returns to town next day, Forbes reports for duty at Governor's Island. He hungers for Persis, but is determined not to see her. He meets Senator Tait at luncheon next day, and the old man tells him he has accepted the post of Ambassador to France and asks Forbes to become his military aide. Forbes accepts with gratitude.

Meantime, Willie Enslee has got Persis to agree to immediate marriage, and she indulges in an orgy of shopping and preparation. She finally decides the greatest kindness to Forbes will be not to invite him to the wedding. On one of her shopping trips she encounters Stowe Webb and Alice Neff running away to marry. Senator Tait having made Stowe one of his secretaries; and by her pessimistic attitude towards "love in a cottage," Persis dissuades them.

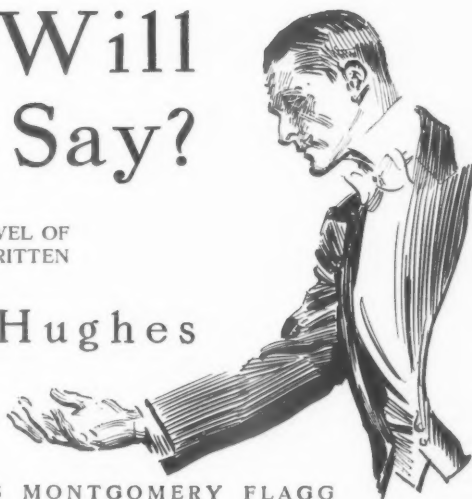
On the morning before he sails, Forbes reads the newspaper accounts of Persis' wedding. He is filled with bitterness. Persis is only exhausted. She thinks little of Forbes or anyone else, until she and Willie escape the guests and go to the hotel where they are to tarry till the morrow—when they board the Enslee yacht for a honeymoon cruise. Then the horror of her loveless marriage comes to her in full force.

What Will People Say?

THE GREATEST NOVEL OF
NEW YORK EVER WRITTEN

By Rupert Hughes

Author of "Miss 318,"
"The Old Nest," etc.



ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

AS Forbes had once surveyed the tide of Fifth Avenue from the upper-deck of a motor-bus, so now, from a sky-scraping ship he watched the thronged traffic along the spacious avenue of the Hudson River and the broad plaza of the Bay.

Among the tugs, noisy and rowdy as newsboys, the waddling ferryboats, the barges loaded with refuse or freight trains, the passenger boats and excursion boats and the merchantmen from many ports, a few yachts picked their way superciliously, their bowsprits like upturned noses, their trim white flanks like skirts drawn aside.

Among these yachts, though Forbes was unaware of it, was the *Isolde*, known to those who know such things as a ridiculously luxurious craft, a floating residence. Persis had christened the yacht at Willie's request and he had accepted the name as a good omen, since he said: "I always have a perfect sleep when '*Isolde*' is under way."

Persis, herself now an *Isolde* wedded to one man and loving another, passed the famous sky-line which seemed to continue the Palisades,—except that it was fantastically carved and honey-combed with windows. When these cliffs of human fashioning were drawn backward, there was a space of dancing water and then Governor's Island with

its mouldy old mousetrap of a fort.

Never dreaming that Forbes was on the liner that had gone down the Bay a few moments before, Persis fastened her binocular on the Island and tried to pick him out from among the men whom distance rendered Liliputian. She selected some vague promenader and sent him her blessings. If he ever received them, he never knew whence they came.

To-day's Persis was altogether another woman from yesterday's Persis. The toil and fever of preparation, the Bacchantic orgies of purchase, the dressing up, the celebration of the festival—these were the joys of the wedding to her, and she had drained them to the full. They left her exhausted and sated. The anticipation was over; the realization began.

In some wiser communities the bride and groom separate for a day or two, after the ceremony. But Persis had no such breathing-space. Persis was delivered to Willie Enslee in a state of fagged-out nerves, muscles and brain. To him, however, the weeks of preparation had been a mere annoyance, a postponement, a prelude too long, too ornate. And when at last the prize was his, he found the fact almost intolerably beautiful. He possessed Persis Enslee! She had no longer even a name of her own. Miss Cabot had been merged into the Enslee Estates.

But Willie's touch chilled Persis clammily. What she saw in his eyes offended her utterly, filled her with loathing and with panic. But after this first rebellion, she regained control of her fears and reasoned coldly with herself. When she had said "Yes!" to Willie's courtship, and when she had made her affirmations in the church, she had given him her I. O. U. She was not one to repudiate a gambling loss. She forbore resistance, but she could not mimic rapture. Yet rapture was part of the bargain.

She was alone upon the ocean now and she feared her husband. She found him somewhat ridiculous in his uniform as owner, with his yachting cap a trifle topheavy for his slim skull. Yet he was the owner; his flag and his club pennant were fluttering aloft.

He ogled her as he paced the unstable deck—and found her more beautiful than ever, clad in a trim white suit and curled up in her chair like a purring kitten, the sun lifting over her through the awning like a golden powder. And he knew that she was his. He paused at her side and put his arms about her, and pinched the lobe of her ear, and pursed his lips to kiss her red lips. She winced, then frowned and shook her head.

"Why not?" he demanded.

"The crew is watching," she explained. And he retorted:

"They expect us to be a little silly, don't they? They'll think it stranger if we aren't than if we are, won't they? Even those Scandinavian sailors are human."

And so—for the sake of the Scandinavians—she accepted his caresses.

It was such a sarcastic parody of her own code that she laughed aloud. She was good sport enough to laugh at herself when the joke was on her.

But it was bitter laughter—and it ended on the margin of hysteria. She conquered that—for the sake of the Scandinavians. But she felt unutterably forlorn, miserably ridiculous, fooled.

That bitterness of hers embittered Enslee. He felt that he was being made ridiculous in the sight of man and God and himself. He remembered proverbs about mastership, about woman's love

of brutality, her fondness for being overpowered.

He grew fiercely petulant, sardonic, ugly. He whined and swore and muttered.

Persis was married and not married. Strange fires were kindled and left to smolder sullenly. And only now she understood who and what it was she had married. Only now she realized what it meant to marry without love and to marry for keeps. The vision of her future was unspeakably hideous. Her life was already a failure, her career a disaster.

Persis had always loved crowds and the excitement they make. It was only with Forbes that she found contentment in dual solitude, in hours of quiet converse, or in a mute communion. Next best to being with him was being alone, for then she had thoughts of him for company.

Now Forbes was banished from her life by her own decree. Willie was to be her companion for all her days and nights, while her youth perished loveless.

And now once more she pined for crowds. Solitude with Willie was a Sahara without oases, an alkaline Mojave. She grew frantic to be rid of him, or at least to mitigate him with other companionships. And he who had been restlessly unhappy without her found that he could not be happy with her because of the one mad regret that he could not make her love him as he loved her.

Mismatched and incompatible in every degree, they glared at one another like sick wretches in the same hospital ward. The next evening as they sat at table in the dining saloon it came over her that for the rest of her life she must see that unbeautiful face opposite her. She felt an impulse to scream, to run to the railing and leap overboard, to thwart that life-sentence in any possible way. But she kept her frenzy hidden in her breast and said with all the inconsequence she could assume:

"To-morrow they'll be playing the first international polo game."

Even Willie heard the shiver of longing in the tone. It meant that the honeymoon was already boring her. His heart broke, but all he said was:

"Er—yes—I believe it is to-morrow. Like to go?"

"Oh, no," she cried, "I was just thinking what a splendid sight it will be. Everybody will be there, I suppose."

"Er—yes—I suppose so."

She lighted her third cigarette since the soup, and rising from the table, drifted to the piano clamped to the walls of the yacht's drawing room. Her mind was far off; and her fingers, left to themselves, stumbled through a disjointed chaos of melodies from nocturnes to tangos and back.

Willie stood it as long as he could; then his torment broke out in a cry more tragic than its words:

"For God's sake play something or quit."

She quit.

She walked to a porthole and stared out at the dark waves shuffling past like stampeding cattle.

He apologized at once: "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to. I apologize."

"Oh, that's all right," she sighed with doleful graciousness. But when he knelt by her and put his arm around her, she slipped from his clasp and went out on the deck. He followed her. But neither of them spoke.

The moon on the sea spread a pathway of dancing white tiles. She wanted to run away, to step forth on that fantastic pavement and follow it out of the world.

To Forbes on a distant ship in mid-ocean the same moon was spreading the same path straight to him. He stared into its shifting glamour till his eyes were bewitched. He could see Persis walking on the water in the boudoir cap and the shimmering things she wore that morning.

They were thinking of each other, longing for each other, and the space between them was widening every moment.

It came over Persis with maddening vividness that she had made a ruin of her happiness. All the wealth was nothing but a mockery. Even the hats and the multitude of dresses were wasted splendor, weapons of conquest to be left in an armory.

The night grew more and more wonderful. The moon was like a white face

flung back with unappeased desire. The wind across the waves tugged amorously with her hair and whimpered with longing. And she was with Willie Enslee, the unlovable, the hideously uninteresting, the intolerable. She was handcuffed to Willie Enslee for life.

The longing that thrilled the night world thrilled Enslee's heart too, and he crept close to her, his adoration, his wife, the only soul on earth he deeply loved. He set his cheek against hers and clenched her in his arms fiercely. He felt again that hopeless antipathy, though all she said was a faintly petulant, "Don't! please!"

It struck him in the face like a little fist. He moved aloof from her in abject humiliation, and thought hard, took out a cigarette, tapped it on the back of his hand, puffed restlessly, threw the cigarette over the rail—and a moment later took out another. The sailing master passed. Willie called to him.

"Svendsen!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Put about and make for home."

"I beg pardon, sir."

"You heard!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

The commands were given in the distance; a bell rang distinctly in the engine room; and the stars wheeled across the sky as the yacht came around.

The phosphorescent sea revealed the wake they had ploughed in a long straight furrow of white fire, and now there was a sharp curve in the line. And shortly they were paralleling its dimming radiance.

They were bound for home. The mere thought of the word brought a tragic chuckle from Enslee's heart. Home was a word he could not hope to use. Home was a thing he must do without.

LI

Persis was sorry for her husband, but just a trifle sorrier for Persis.

Willie was a darling to yield so easily. It showed her how much he loved her—also how meekly he obeyed her. That is always an important question to settle. Perhaps it is what honeymoons are for—training stations in which husbands are



broken to harness and taught to answer a mere chirrup: it saves the whip.

But the comfort Persis took in finding that her husband was her messenger boy ended as they came up the Bay again. She suddenly realized that for Willie

and her to be seen at the polo games when they had so ostentatiously set out on their honeymoon only two days before would provoke a landslide of scandal. Everybody on earth would be at the polo game and she and Willie could not



She lighted her third cigarette since the soup and drifted to the piano clamped to the walls of the yacht's drawing room. Her mind was far off; her fingers stumbled through a disjointed chaos of melodies. Willie stood it as long as he could; then his torment broke out in a cry: "For God's sake, play something or quit!" She quit.

"Why the bally hell didn't you think of all this in the first place?"

"In the first place, Willie," said Persis, "you are the man of the family and supposed to do the thinking. In the second place, I won't be sworn at."

"I wasn't swearing at you, my love. I was just swearing. Well, if you don't want to go to the polo games—where in—where do you want to go?—up to the country place?"

Here was a problem. She was sure that she did not want to be alone in a country house with Willie. That would be worse than the yacht. Since she could not endure either to be alone with him or to go among crowds with him, the dilemma was perfect. Already there was another incompatibility established.

She and Willie sneaked from their yacht to their house in

hope to escape attention. They would be ridiculed to death behind their backs and to their faces. Therefore they must not go.

She explained this to Willie and he shook his head and broke out peevishly:

town. They astounded the servants and there was much scurrying and whisking. They dined together, alone, though Persis was eager to be in a restaurant where there was music. She was like a child kept in after school. She flattened

JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

her nose against a window pane and stared out at life. After dinner the prospect of an evening with Willie rendered her desperate. They could at least go to the theatre somewhere. Nobody was in town; they would be quite unnoticed. But when nobody is in town the theatres close up. There was nothing they had not seen or had not been warned against. Willie proposed a roof garden—Hammerstein's.

They went there and beheld a chimpanzee that rode various bicycles, smoked a cigar expertly and spat with amazing fidelity to the technique of the super-ape; also a British peeress who danced in less clothes than the chimpanzee.

Ten Eyck was there. He tried to hide from Persis and Willie, not because he was ashamed to be seen by them, but because he was afraid that Persis and Willie would not want to be seen by him. He had cherished no illusions for the success of the match in its sentimental side, but he had expected them to see the honeymoon through. He kept out of their sight, but they stumbled on him during the intermission, when the audience crowded into a space at the back of the roof where a patient cow was milked by electricity at an uncowly hour, and where couples rowed boats up and down a tiny lake.

Ten Eyck had not expected Persis and Willie to join this hot and foolish mob. But he felt a hand seize his arm. He turned and looked into Persis' eyes. She welcomed him as a rescuer, but it was Willie that urged him to sit with them. Ten Eyck's hesitation was misconstrued by Persis. She said:

"Perhaps he is—er—not alone."

"Oh, yes I am," Ten Eyck hastened to say. "I'll join you." And he went with them to an upper box. Even Ten Eyck felt a little shy.

Persis and Willie knew what he was thinking and they were like a pair of youngsters caught spooning—only, their misdemeanor was that they had been caught not spooning. Ten Eyck ventured to speak:

"So the penance is over already. I thought you two doves were still on the ark."

"We are, officially," said Persis.

Ten Eyck wanted to help them out, so he said:

"What's matter? Did the yacht puncture a tire or lose a shoe or—"

Willie attempted to carry along the idea by saying:

"It was trouble with the sparker," and he did not understand why Persis blushed and Ten Eyck blurted.

They were rescued from this personal confusion by what would have thrown any audience into a panic ten years before, and now was greeted almost with apathy: the appearance of the British peeress in a costume that was hardly more than Eve wore after the eviction. A gauzy shift was all she had on, with a few wisps of chiffon as opaque as cigarette smoke. Shoulders, arms, and all of her both legs were as bare as her face.

No policeman interfered, and not a sermon had been preached against her. Nudity had lost its novelty and her posturings and curvettings were regarded with as academic a calm as if she were a trick pony or an acrobat. There was much laughter later, when a male comedian burlesqued her, with a bosom composed of two toy balloons, one of which escaped and one of which exploded when he fell.

"I think this age will go down in history as the return to nature," Ten Eyck said, struggling for some impersonal topic. "Women in and out of vaudeville have left off more and more of their concealments, till the only way a woman can arouse suspicion is by keeping something on. And I can't see that we are any worse—or any better. An onion is an onion no matter how many skins it has on or off."

Philosophizing did not interest Willie. He came always back to the individual. By and by he wrestled with silence and asked:

"Er—whatever became of that—er—soldier you brought up to the—er—farm? Stupid, solemn fella—Ward—or—Lord—or something?"

"Forbes, you mean," said Ten Eyck, taking pains not to look at Persis. But he could feel her eager attention in the sudden check of her fan.

"That's it—Forbes. Still at Ellis Island? or is it Ward's?"

"Governor's," said Ten Eyck. "He's been made military attaché at the French Embassy. Sailed for Paris the other day with Senator Tait—and—and Mildred."

Persis' whole body seemed to clench itself like a hand. But Willie, everlastingly oblivious to significant things, dived on:

"Paris, eh? Racing season's on over there now. How'd you like to run across for the Grand Prix. Persis?"

"Paris is a nice place," said Persis, with a mystic veil about her voice.

And now Ten Eyck looked at her. Their eyes met. His were angry and hers fell before their prophetic ire. She stammered a little as she said:

"I like London better. We could make the Royal Cup at Ascot if we hurry. My sister could take care of us in the country."

But Ten Eyck slapped his knees impatiently, glared at her and growled:

"Bluffer! Good night!"

And he was gone without shaking hands.

"What did he mean by bluffer?" said Enslee. "Doesn't he like your sister?"

"Apparently not," said Persis. "And he used to be crazy about her. She threw him overboard for 'Kelly.'"

LII

Willie had arranged for supper at home. As they left the theatre and sped through the streets crowded with uncharacteristic throngs, Persis thought longingly of the tango-hunts she had indulged in during the past season. But there was no one to dance with her now. And she realized that she would be impossibly conspicuous as a café-haunting bride with a husband who abhorred this whole chapter in the chronicles of diversion.

Alone with Willie in the Enslee palace which Ten Eyck described as "a sublime junk shop," Persis was oppressed to melancholia. The air that came in at the windows had a mournful breath. The peculiar aversion for the city that overtakes New Yorkers in the late spring seized her and shook her. The mansions neighborly to theirs were boarded up now, with only a caretaker's window

alight here and there. There was no rescuing third party to make a crowd out of the appallingly tiresome duet with Willie.

"This town is a cemetery," she exclaimed, as she quenched her eighth cigarette stub. "Opening a house here now is like opening a grave in Woodlawn at midnight. You've got to take me away or leave me in Bloomingdale."

"What about Paris?" Willie suggested.

She remembered Ten Eyck's eyes and said: "Let's make it London."

"I'll get what I can to-morrow. You wouldn't like to cross in the yacht?" He asked hungrily. "*Isolde's* all right in the ugliest weather."

She shook her head violently, and yawned and spoke so eloquently of her fatigue that he slunk away to his own room.

The next day he set his secretary to work running down a berth on a steamer. Everything seemed to be gone. People whom the panicky times had reduced from wealth to anxiety were crossing the ocean to places where they could economize without ostentation. The final report was that the only suitable berth was the imperial suite on the new *Imperator*.

"Did you grab it?" said Willie. The secretary shook his head.

"Why the devil didn't you?" Willie snapped.

"They ask five thousand dollars for it."

Even Willie winced at this. "I don't want it for a year," he groaned. "Just one voyage."

"It has a private deck, a drawing-room, two bathrooms, two servant's rooms—"

The "private deck" decided Willie, but when he told Persis he laid stress on the price he paid—not from braggart motives, but as a pathetic sort of courtship.

Persis smiled a little. It was something. But when she found the private deck she took pains to invite other passengers she knew to make it their own piazza. Among the passengers was Mrs. Neff, with Alice.

After Persis had thwarted the elopement with Stowe Webb, the boy had been

tempted to go to Mrs. Neff and plead with her to withdraw her ban now that he was a man of affairs with an assured income. But he imagined what she would say when she asked him the amount of that income—and he imagined her smile. She did not have to ridicule his fortune. The sum itself was so petty that it ridiculed itself.

He and Alice had met clandestinely a few times at the houses of friends, but both were young and both were timid, and their friends were cynical with discouragement. Alice wanted to go to watch him off at the dock, but did not dare and only sent him a tear-blotted steamer-letter. And while he was down in his stateroom reading it, she was locked in her pink and white chamber, crying her blue eyes crimson on her bed. She never spoke of him to her mother, and Mrs. Neff did not know what had become of him.

Now Mrs. Neff was one of those many who are so terribly shrewd that they are sometimes foolish. Noting that Alice never spoke of Stowe Webb, she made up her crafty old mind that the two young wretches were meeting secretly. When she announced that she was going to drag Alice off to Paris, the simple child was able to dissemble her ecstasy and give a convincing portrayal of a daughter who would dutifully endure any sacrifice to gratify her mother's slightest whim.

Persis found London at the height of its June festivity. The President of France was visiting the King of England, and there were state banquets and state balls and state everything, mingled with private celebrations that rivaled them in pomp, and a horse show, and horse races, regimental polo tournaments, an hysterical wholesale celebration of nothing in particular.

Many of Persis' schoolgirl friends were duchesses, countesses, marchionesses, mere ladies. Lady Crainleigh, whom Persis had once beaten in a potato race at a country horse-show in Westchester, gave a dance where seven hundred guests were present and where titles were as common as pebbles on a shore. Persis wore her "all around" diamond crown

and danced with a Russian grand duke and a prince or two.

The tango and the turkey trot had spread overseas, and royalties trod on Persis' toes as they bungled the steps like yokels. It was fantastic to hear the trashy tunes of American music halls resounding through the ball rooms of mansions and palatial hotels.

At the Royal Ascot, the Queen sent a duke to fetch Persis to the royal box, and spoke amiably of her sister.

But, however Persis glittered abroad, when the inevitable time came to become mere woman and go home, she must always return to the nagging presence of Willie, infatuated the more by the inaccessible distances her soul kept from his.

With his harrowed face, his unwelcome caresses, his unanswerable prayers for a little love, he ceased to be tragic. He became a pest.

Persis was learning wherein wealth has its thorns, its nauseas, its petty annoyances, its daily denials, its hair-cloth shirts, its poverties, as well as poverty.

She began to feel that if she had married Forbes and made her own clothes, she could not have grown wearier than she grew from putting on and taking off the complicated harnesses devised by intoxicated dressmakers.

Sometimes she declared that she would rather trim one bonnet and wear it the rest of her life than try on any more of the works of the mad hatters of Europe.

And what mockery her splendor was! for the ulterior purpose of gorgeousness is love. Humanity has stretched its mating season throughout the whole year, but the meaning of bright plumage remains an invitation to courtship, a more or less disguised advertisement: "Behold, I am beautiful."

Persis was dressing herself up for yesterday's party. Men courted her still, silyly and disgustingly, but she felt herself insulted by the adventure, degraded by the implications. Whatever other faults she had, Persis had nothing of the female rake in her nature. She was meant to be loved by many, and to love one. Her heart had selected its one among the ones; but the hand had married elsewhere. There was great danger

for her soul if she did not meet that One. And greater danger, if she did.

LIII

Paris and London were like two rival circuses bidding for the public, beating tom-toms, blowing horns, and sending out band-wagons and parades. While Persis was wearying of the English side-shows, Forbes was tiring of the French. The wounds Persis had inflicted on his heart and his pride were still fresh and bleeding. The fever had not left him. At the thought of her, or the sight of her frequent name in the papers or her portrait in the illustrated papers, the shame of his defeat still ran across his brow; still the hunger for her gripped him with sickening regret.

Senator Tait had not enjoyed the progress of his conspiracy. For secretary he had taken Stowe Webb, who paced the deck like an immature *Hamlet* with a heart draped in black. For military attaché he had brought Forbes, whose thoughts flew backward with the smoke instead of scouting ahead. For acting ambassadress he had brought a daughter who, though torn away from her New York charities, found new ministries to engage her everywhere—in the stoke-hold, in the steerage and the second cabin. Instead of holding hands in moonlit nooks and funnel-corners, she was taking up purses, sterilizing milk for sick babies and selling tickets for a benefit concert.

Forbes admired Mildred profoundly, but he preferred his own sorrows to the woes she discovered in other people. Mildred liked Forbes immensely, in a motherly, elder-sisterly, trained-nursish way. But of love between them there was no visible trace.

Senator Tait did not know that other dangers lurked in ambush ahead of himself. Mrs. Neff, ignorant of Stowe Webb's office, had come straight to Paris from the *Imperator*, bound to expose Alice again to the Senator's inspection. More dangerous yet was Winifred Mather.

The heavy times in Wall Street had played havoc with Bob Fielding's means and with his spirits. The gradual jolt-

ing down and down of values, and the buying public's desertion of the market left the Stock Exchange like a neglected billiard parlor, where for want of custom the professionals play against one another—for points.

Bob Fielding was so big that when he was happy he was a *Falstaff*, but when he was unhappy he was like a whale ashore. Winifred liked him happy. She grew weary of her blue behemoth and began to think again of Senator Tait. She reasoned that he really needed a wife; it was a handicap to the Embassy to have only an elder daughter to run its social branch, especially such a daughter as Mildred, with her exasperating virtues and her last year's clothes. Winifred felt it her patriotic duty to marry the Embassy over.

She had a widowed sister in Paris, Mrs. Mather Edgcombe. With her as compplotter and under her aegis, Winifred attacked Senator Tait, in a campaign so skillfully arranged under so many disguises that the Senator was left hardly a minute to himself. All his invitations included Forbes and Mildred, and young Stowe Webb.

At one of them, a night fête in her house in the Rue de Monceau, with musicians in Persian costume playing in the garden under the illuminated trees, Mrs. Neff and Alice were included unbeknownst to Winifred. She was aghast at the tactical mistake, and she was curt enough when Alice, hastening as usual in one direction and looking in another, ran into her.

"Oh, it's you, Alice. How are you? I didn't know you were in Paris? Followed the Senator over, I suppose?"

"I suppose so," said Alice. "Did you?"

"Where's your mother?"

"She's probably looking for me. I hope she doesn't find me. Have you seen Stowe?"

"Somewhere," said Winifred, with a perceptible thaw. "Does your mother know he's here?"

"If she did, should I be here?" Alice giggled, and laughter bubbled from Winifred too. It continued with increase as Alice went on: "The Senator and I have come to a perfect understanding. He knows I don't love him, and that I



Liveried servants with wan faces glided through the crowd, and lifting the chair, struggled from the room Persis waited in a trance, shaken now and then with sudden onsets of ague, but otherwise getting home—I feel all creepy. Awfully unfortunate, wasn't it? Let's be getting



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

with its great burden. Forbes followed the chair as if it were already the coffin of his ideal among men. motionless, her whole soul pensive. Willie hung about her, whining: "I say, old girl, let's be home. Rotten luck for the Ambassador. Nice old boy, too. Let's be getting home."

do love Stowe. He gave Stowe his job, as a starter to get me here. Yes, he did! My awful mother of course is always conspiring to leave the Senator alone with me. Sends us driving and Louvre-ing together. Well, that angel man, the Senator, just waits till mamma is safely out of sight—then he notifies Stowe and goes away about his business, and leaves us together."

"Oh, then the Senator's devotion for you is all for Stowe's sweet sake?" And there was a rapturous little break in Winifred's voice.

Alice only gasped: "Heavens! here comes that awful mother of mine. Don't give me away!" And she fled from tree to tree.

There was small risk that Winifred would violate the secret left with her, and she greeted Mrs. Neff with an unprecedented smile when that lady swept into the arbor, and found there the last person on earth she would have wished to see.

"Why, it's Winifred Mather!" was her undeniable affirmation. "So you are in Paris!"

"Yes, dear. Did you bring dear Alice with you?"

"I was just going to ask if you had seen her."

Winifred lied with the glibness of long social training:

"No, indeed. But I'd love to. Let's look for her."

And she took Mrs. Neff's sharp elbow in her fat hand, and led her in the opposite direction. A moment later she whirled her away from an alley of roses where Stowe Webb was blundering along in such eager search of Alice that he would have walked into her mother, but for Winifred's cleverness as a chauffeuse.

"She's here somewhere," Mrs. Neff was saying as her eyes ransacked the glittering crowd. "I snatched her away from America to keep her from the possibility of meeting that young Webb."

"What a very clever idea!" said Winifred and she began to laugh so helplessly that Mrs. Neff grew suspicious. But having no clue to work on, she changed the subject: "Persis and Willie are here, I see."

"Are they? I telegraphed the dear girl an invitation, but I was afraid she was stuck in London."

"She came over for the *Prix de Drags* to-morrow."

"How does the poor child look after—after honeymooning with Willie, Heaven help her!—and him!"

"She looks—oh, of course, she's still our dear beautiful Persis, but Willie, of course, is the same dear little dampfool. My maid, the Irish one, said Persis looked 'like her heart was dead in her, the creature!' She had it from his man that Willie and she get along like the monkey and the parrot. But, of course, one can't listen to servants."

"No, of course not; though God knows what we should do for news without them."

As they entered the house, Mrs. Neff saw Forbes. He was in his military full dress and he was standing alone in a muse. He was as solitary in the crowd as if he were a statue on a battlefield gazing through eyes of bronze.

"There's our little Snojer man" said Winifred.

"So it is," said Mrs. Neff, struggling towards him through a sort of panic of complexly moving groups. "How is the dear boy? Paris has swept him off his feet, eh?"

"He's the melancholiest man here—the ghost of the boulevards."

"It's too bad," said Mrs. Neff. "He was the man for Persis. Where's the Ambassador taking him?"

They saw Senator Tait take Forbes by the arm, though they could not hear him say with a curious, sick thickness:

"Let's get out into the air a minute."

Forbes was alarmed by his tone and by the prominence of the veins about his forehead and throat. They walked into the garden, filled with soft lantern lights like luminous flowers, the moon over all and the strangely zestful air of Paris like an intoxicant. The orchestra in the garden was just finishing a tune and the orchestra in the house was just beginning an American tango played with a marked French accent. They found a marble seat in a green niche where it was yet too early for flirts to be found.

"Well, Harvey, she's here—that damned woman—and her toy husband. But then, that flame has smoldered out, hasn't it?"

Forbes only sighed: "Oh, I think so—I hope so!"

"What's this? What's this?" Senator Tait gasped. "Are you still at her mercy? *her* mercy?"

Forbes gave a gesture of distress. "I don't know! The thought of her has never left me. The sight of her again hurts like the bullet I got in that first brush with the Spanish. And she doesn't look happy. There was a shadow over her beauty."

"There ought to be," Senator Tait grumbled. "She's a cold-blooded, mercenary, calculating—"

"Don't!" Forbes pleaded, but the old man raged on:

"She sold herself to a man she didn't love. She's to blame for—"

"The older I grow," Forbes interposed, "the less I feel that people deserve either blame or praise for being what they are or doing what they do."

"Don't waste your pity on her; she had none for you."

"It's not pity. I want her—and only her."

The Senator clapped his hand to his left side. Forbes turned to him with an exclamation of alarm.

"You ought to see your doctor."

Senator Tait shook his head. "No, he'd only swear at me for disobeying him. I'm all right—if I can only avoid any excitement. Been going a little too hard. It's that damned dilated heart of mine. The doctor said I ought to be in bed to-night."

"Why did you come here then?"

"Oh, young Webb was afraid that Alice's mother would drag her home if she knew I was not about. But I'm a fool. This life is killing me. I ought to run down to Vichy or Evian-les-bains for a few days."

"Yes, you mustn't delay any further."

"I'll go if you'll come with me, Harvey. For one thing, it will get you away from that woman."

"Oh, there's no danger from her," said Forbes. "She's married now."

Tait shrugged his shoulders: "That's when a woman is most dangerous. Young girls tied to their mother's apron strings are risky enough, the Lord knows, but when a woman unhappily married meets an old lover who is still unmarried—humph, the weather doesn't last long as a topic of conversation. You come along with me."

Forbes felt doubly humiliated by his position: "I don't like the idea of running away from a woman."

"You're good enough soldier to know that there are times when it is cowardly not to run away. Do we go to Evian?"

"All right. To-morrow if you wish."

"Good! And I want you to promise not to see that woman at all to-night. There are a lot of sharp eyes about, and the gossips can work up a big trade on a very small capital. Will you promise?"

"You are needlessly worried."

"Harvey, I never believed in playing with fire. I haven't asked you many favors. Will you grant me this one?"

Forbes was almost filial in his obedience: "Why, of course, I promise not to meet her, if I can avoid it."

"Good," Senator Tait rose to his feet with some difficulty. He was weak and shaken with premonitions. When a man's heart races and misses fire, he is filled with dismay. He paused to lay his hands on Forbes' shoulders and pleaded as if for forgiveness for his solicitude: "Harvey, you may think I'm an old fool, but if you didn't run away from this danger, in after years you might have been sorry that you didn't."

"I understand," said Forbes. "God bless you, and I appreciate it. I am undyingly grateful for all you've done for me."

"I've done nothing but make a crutch of you, used you to fill the place of my own boy. If only you could—but we won't talk of her. But if anything happens to me—"

"Nothing is going to happen to you."

"I know that, but if anything should, I—I want you to promise to take care of Mildred. She'll have money enough—and so will you. I've fixed that—but—she'll need somebody to—well, we'll talk it over at Evian. Let's go home."

(Continued on page 1024, this issue)



He began to give Cornella seven sugar rolls for a nickel, instead of six.

The Basement of Romance

By Ida M. Evans

Author of 'The Back Porch of Life,' etc

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

THEY say ("They" are the unpleasant statistical folks who carry figure and fact bombs concealed on their mental person to fling at unwary conversational gaps) that if you stand often enough or long enough at the intersection of State Street and Madison in Chicago, you may meet every friend, enemy, affinity, debtor, country relation or old school-mate that you ever owned. It is the hub of ambulant humanity, the bull's eye of pavement that every foot strikes sooner or later.

Cornella Wilken wasn't partial to statistics or bromidions. If she heard this assumption, she didn't listen. Or if she

listened, she forgot it. Cornella had more important things to remember—namely, the harsh rise in price—five cents to seven!—of the delectable fruit salad put forth at the Edible Cafetria, and the unkind habit of fate in toeing cheap hose with hurting seams. For some twelve years she stood at that throbbing intersection, shortly after six o'clock, six evenings out of seven, for a period of time varying from thirty seconds to thirty minutes, and saw nothing more intimate with her own life than a continuous procession of snailing street cars and a big blue-garbed, whistle-blowing policeman. And presently, sometimes in thirty seconds, but more often in thirty minutes,

there snailed by a car whose back platform promised room for one more pair of shoes, and then Cornella and a horde of other waiting ones swarmed at it like a Bulgarian regiment at a Turkish mosque. And another day of toil had glided onto history's page.

Anyway, if Cornella had met all her friends there in one cordial hand-grabbing bunch, the resulting excitement would not have tempered the pain of her smallest soft corn. They were merely a snuffling landlady; an asthmatic former landlady; an elderly girl, a stenographer, whose room adjoined Cornella's; another elderly girl who worked at the counter opposite Cornella's; another girl, more elderly, who used to work at the same counter but now had married and gone to Nevada; the stout, floury-faced man who owned the little German bakery around the corner from Cornella's rooming house; and the affable but dull pastor of the Methodist church around the next corner.

Cornella liked the bakery man. He was an amiable fellow, and his sugar rolls were delicious. But when his fat, floury wife died, leaving to his alarmed incompetency the upbringing of three fat, floury children, and he began to give Cornella seven sugar rolls for a nickel instead of the proper six, she abandoned his shop for the fly-specked one in the next street. Maybe he had no "intentions." But there was a peculiar calculation of eye accompanying his kindness that alarmed her. Those fat, floury children! Ugh!—to wash and comb and dress them! Cornella's tired soul shrank.

Of enemies, the nearest to that claim was a fruit huckster who at one gamble gave her in change a punctured dime and a Canadian quarter. Cornella had the sway-backed mentality that inclines to the line of least resistance. She probably would have accepted one bad coin. That would have meant merely a paring of next day's lunch. To accept both meant no lunch at all. Cornella gave back the bananas and demanded her dollar. Whereupon a very geyser of malediction hissed at her, and Cornella dreamed three nights running, of brigands and thumbscrews.

Of debtors she had none. Debt, the

poorhouse, the county hospital and the potter's field were the four grewsome scarecrows of Cornella's "some day." The very thought that "some day" one of them might lunge at her, sent her breath stranglingly down her throat—that throat from which the pink cleanliness of youth was receding, upon which the strained yellow of middle age was creeping. That thought pushed her wistful, reluctant, past the palate-tickling but unsubstantial fruit salad, and nailed seven more cents to the flimsy fence of savings she was trying to build between her old age and want. For Cornella belonged to the expectation-less band of women who will have no fence save what their own hands build.

And if she had bumped face-to-face and elbow-to-rib into her entire circle of relatives, it is doubtful if she would have recognized any one of them, or they her. So many years had passed since she left the shabby, loose-shingled cottage three blocks from Main Street for the shabby, blotchy-calcimined room three miles from "The Loop." Years are memory's anæsthesia. They had almost vaped away the features of the step-father, an uncle redolent of tobacco juice and hogpens, a cattish aunt and a nondescript batch of cousins. All other relatives had crossed the chasm which neither memory nor recognition can span. Of schoolmates the only one whom she recollected clearly was a chunky, yellow-haired, fulvous-eye browed, tannish-lashed boy named Humpy Brown who was always slobbering over a big apple. His father owned the town livery stable, and Humpy, lounging in its malodorous doorway, had harried her early teens by velling whenever she passed, "*Horny, thorny Corne-e-e.*"

"Affinity" was a word that Cornella didn't use. She shuddered mentally at it. In her vocabulary it ranked with such verbal objectionables as beer, rouge, free lunch, cockroaches, street mashers, slit-and-petticoatless skirts, black-rimmed finger nails, unmended stockings and dandruff. All were signposts of personal, housewifely or moral slatternliness. Cornella's ancestors were mostly United Presbyterians, that biggest output of staid Ohio. So you may know

without asking that at the age of twenty-eight Cornella had never tasted ginger ale, that her skirts, style or not, covered her ankles with decent length and respectable width, that she wore fleece-lined stockings from October till May, and high-necked corset covers all the year round, and that the only men to whom she spoke without proper introduction were pastors, bakers and floorwalkers. And she primly, grimly disapproved of Adeline, who stood at the same counter with her. Adeline powdered, painted, strained stylishness in the sleazy scantiness of her gowns, and made acquaintances freely, even—how Cornella blushed over the reminiscences that Adeline unblushingly giggled!—promiscuously!

And yet Cornella was like her name. At first glance you read it Cornelia, that prudish, pragmatical appellation which tradition and "East Lynne" have delivered to elderly females whose benevolence and affection have grown inward. A second glance, and you see that the shortening of the unkind *e* and the elimination of the snarly *i* have more perkily vowelized it. A word of liquid consonance smiles at you. Just so was it with Cornella herself. When you first looked across the counter piled high with remnants of madras and percale, you saw a tall, slim, prim, uninteresting, tired-eyed woman: a typical representative of those who "stand and wait" at six dollars per. (Literally, being a very faithful and courteous specimen of her kind, she got nine dollars toward the end of the twelve years. But there had been so many years before when six—and less—came her way that she retained, willy-nilly, the imprinted expression of tired anxiety. Even time cannot erase certain imprints.)

Her hair, medium thick, medium brown, was combed up with that plaintive neatness which is a daily affidavit that its owner's sense of coquetry wears the cerement of apathy. Her shirtwaists, plain, neat, clean, were pulled down tidily over breasts neither full nor flat. Her eyes were blue, not dark or light, and very tired—with that dull tiredness which comes from too much looking at living and not enough looking at life.

A second glance, and you saw—with surprise—that though her eyes were tired to vacuity, a sort of charm lay in their wistful depths, as if the tiredness might be only cornea-deep and not rooted in soul-stupidity. And you saw that she was not thin-lipped, or malice-pupiled, or hawky of nose, or scrawny of cheek outline, or of neck, nor had she any of the facial footprints left by ingrowing emotions which, in their way, hurt as much as ingrowing toe-nails and are as responsible for as much grimaced agony.

The trouble was that no one ever looked twice at Cornella—except the baker, and occasionally a frantic customer, impatient for a package, who had forgotten what white-waist-and-black-skirt waited upon her. There ensued an abstracted murmur to a fellow shopper. "Don't some of these clerks have real sweet faces? That tall, oldish girl—" And then Cornella slid back into her niche of unremarkedness.

She was the kind that look oldish. She had looked oldish when she left the eighth grade to clerk in her step-father's grocery store; she had been more oldish when she quit that store to bring her expectations and her grammar school education to the city that is equally facile in firing or tiring young blood. But those times her oldishness was a mask. Under it youth lay expectant, waiting to be scrolled by the three S's of romance; Something, Sometime, Somebody.

Besides the eighth grade knowledge and the expectations, she brought five figured lawn dresses—and learned that landladies and laundries discouraged such vanities; a brown cloth suit—and had to have it dyed before she could hold a position; three hats, a six-year old, a four-year old, and a young affair of three summers—and was horrified to learn that the newest was most out of style; a cloth-bound "Gems of Poetry," a paper-backed copy of "Thelma," a pink-enameled hair brush, a backless "Complete Arithmetic" (she was hazy in fractions) and a blue celluloid manicuring set. The expectations didn't itemize themselves. They included happiness, of course. Which is what all of us, wise and foolish, sneakily or openly, hunt from the careless cradle to the carefree grave.

Specifically she hoped for a job and a fringe of gaiety.

She found the job. Statistics and captious newspaper warnings to the contrary, there is always work for a healthy young girl with a grammar school education. She got four-fifty a week. You can't live on it, of course, but when you have to, you do. Her fingers felt tentatively about for the expected fringe. It wasn't there. She glanced around sharply once or twice. But coddling expenses within four-fifty leaves scant time for glancing. Some time, she expected—

That was as far as she got: expecting. You see, so few people stopped for a second glance at Cornella, and those few were entirely too hurried for a third. So when Cornella quit glancing, precious little glancing took place. And the months and the years treat expectations much as they treat complexions. They wrinkle them, streak them, fade them, de-luster them, sometimes kill them. By the time that Cornella had climbed to the redundancy of six whole dollars for her personal use, she was a bit tired. She quietly ceased to bother with expectations. She did not throw them away. Few do that, although plenty of people cynically pretend that they have tossed them to oblivion. She merely laid them away—in a remote nook of her soul or mind or heart—whichever keeps shelf room for expectancy and dreams. Some day, when she wasn't so tired, or was more tired than usual, she would take them out, shake the dust off them, give them an airing. Some day—

Meanwhile the days went on, as days do, be they glad or unglad. A monotony of days grows into a monotony of years with incredible speed. One evening Cornella (she happened to be more tired than usual) looked for the expectations that she had laid away. She wanted to shake off the dust that likely had accum-



Shameless Adelinel She had never seen him before. Yet—she smiled back!

ulated, play with them awhile, and then put them back, only on a lower shelf. Gracious—they were not dusty! They were dust itself. They fell to pieces at her touch. Moths had got at them—eaten them to shreds. And worse than moths. The shreds were moldy—worm-nibbled mold. Poor dead things! Cornella cried. She wished that she hadn't neglected them so long. Maybe if she'd taken them out once or twice—or even looked at them— But she had always been so tired. And now they were debris. Poor, neglected, uncared-for, lost expectations! Cornella, sniveling, reached for a handkerchief to blow her nose and mop up the tears trickling at its sides. She caught a glimpse of her grief-distorted face in the specked mirror of the peeling-varnished oak bureau opposite.

When you are a tired-eyed, oldish woman, obsequies, whether over flesh-and-blood, your complexion, or expectations, are not beautifying. Cornella's had the combined effect of a sty, a fever blister, a foreclosure on the old home-

stead, a gum boil, a family row, a neuralgic jawbone and a bilious headache. Her eyes were bulgy and red-rimmed. Her nose was wet and crimson. Her mouth hung open—Cornella furiously grabbed the nearest article, a shoe of worn heel, and flung it at the gibing mirror. It missed—luckily for the fence that she was building.

"You might as well be worm-eaten yourself!" she hurled then at the mocking glass. Her wet eyes blinked shut. Before them floated whitely the wraiths of those expectations. She could itemize them now. Group One held love, a home, the cling of baby fingers. Group Two held a private secretaryship, or the Paris trips and high-salaried path of head buyer. Groups Three and Four were hazier. But it was a rosy haze. Below head buyer hung many desirable titles. One might—But the rosy haze melted away; the white wraiths drifted on. Only a gray, gaunt, unbuilt fence remained.

"You're just a plain, homely, growing-old nothing," wailed Cornella at her tear-smears oldish face. "Without brains, or charm, or gumption. You're of no more importance than the board a bolt of percale is wrapped around. D-da—" But Cornella's United Presbyterianism was too deeply inbred; it choked back the "D-darn living!" And then Cornella went to bed, cried some more, went to sleep, and the next morning she got up, combed her hair with plaintive neatness, pulled a neat plain waist down tidily, went to work, worked till six o'clock, waited at State and Madison for a snailing platform that allowed footroom, struggled on, went home, went to bed—Poor Cornella! She might just as well have been named and natured Cornella.

"Got the influenza?" asked Adeline the second day after the obsequies—and forgot to wait for an answer. Down the aisle approached a tall, brown-eyed young fellow, exceedingly pressed of trouser and radiantly clean-shaven. From under the narrow rim of his brown derby glittered a friendly smile. The smile was not only friendly; it was a query, an invitation, a challenge and a dubitation. Shameless Adeline! She had never seen him before. Never! Cornella

knew. Yet—she smiled back. He paused, leaned acquaintedly against the counter—

When he had gone on, Adeline grinned defiance and apology at the outraged propriety that she fancied she saw in Cornella's sober eyes. "Aint he awful? Asking me to make a theatre date with him—and me never laid eyes on him before!"

Cornella had heard the parting murmur, "So long—eight-ten." She asked primly, "Aren't you afraid? A perfect stranger?"

Adeline ran adjusting fingers through an already adjusted frizzy fringe of black hair. "Lordy, no! He wont eat me. He wont steal my pocketbook—I'll watch it. Didn't he have elegant eyes? I'm glad,"—with a down glance of satisfaction—"that I wore this pleated frill. Say, I believe I'll run over to the fancy waist section. There's a sale to-day. Cluny insert, hand embroidered." But Adeline sighed with a measure of shame as she flirted a powder puff over her chin. Adeline was one of those who would beautify themselves for crossing the River Styx. "I know I'm awful. But I can't be a quince when a good-looking chap thinks I'm a marshmallow. I suppose,"—Adeline rendered involuntary and wistful admiration to superior principles of conduct—"that *you* hand 'em hot shots when they try to scrape acquaintance!"

The red that rimmed Cornella's eyelids was lost in the greater red that flooded Cornella's face, that crept painfully over her neck and down under her prim high collar. How, pray, could you hand a fellow a hot shot, when—Cornella hastily spread a bolt of pink-striped percale before a woman who had asked for navy blue madras. Not all Cornella's heritage of United Presbyterianism gave her grace to confess to Adeline that in her entire life no occasion had arisen to hand out a "hot shot" of rebuking refusal. A woman can touch two nadirs of shame: one when she yields to temptation; the other when no temptation comes begging her to yield.

Adeline came back joyously with a "dream" of a lace waist. Cornella sociably admired it. She viewed it and

Adeline with a mingling of envy and disapproval; envy at the calm courage with which Adeline grabbed handfuls of romance, disapproval because some day—oh, Cornella knew!—foolish Adeline would tearfully, if not shamefully, draw back a bleeding, bruised hand.

That evening a perfectly strange man accosted Cornella at Madison and State. The snailing line had lain stock still for twenty minutes; either a blockade, or the transportation system was indulging in one of its incomprehensible paralytic recreation periods. Cornella was waiting with the stolid patience that had become a habit. She gripped her leather bag tightly. It held two weeks' pay and a long panel of that gray fence, and the horde of other waiting ones buzzed close around her like an overturned pan of tired flies. The pink rim of her eyes had faded, but her mien was still pallbearerish. She was conscious of only one desire, to get home to supper and then to bed, when from the buzzing horde a pair of eyes met and held her own.

Their owner edged closer. "Pardon me," he said, "but haven't I met you before?" From a smooth thickness of brown hair he raised a straw hat. Not a trim, dapper straw hat, but a comfortable, well-worn affair. He had a thin, agreeable face, and an agreeably modulated voice.

Cornella's acquaintance, past or present, was not large enough to require extended pondering. "No, you haven't," she said instantly and decisively. One of her tired stolid eyes traveled the quiescent line of cars. The other—It must have been because of Adeline's pernicious example. Cornella saw that regret gleamed in his eyes. He was a nice-looking man, too. A trifle shabby of suit. And his eyes, which were a peculiar slate-shot gray, were restless and tired, as though they hadn't seen the pleasant side of existence.

"I beg your pardon," he said courteously.

Cornella stiffly inclined her head in acceptance of the apology, and watched the street cars. Like a huge, lazy caterpillar, the yellow and brown line undulated, slid forward the length of one

car. Cornella looked disappointedly at the mashed, crushed crowd on the steps of the first platform—of the next four.

"I beg your pardon," said the man hesitatingly, "this *is* State Street—is it not?"

Cornella instantly turned to him. Between every comer to the city and all other newcomers, there is a latent clubism. It never dies. It is always ready to extend friendly fingers of information when friendly fingers grope toward it. You may forget the shape of your most disliked aunt's nose, but you never forget the awed excitement with which you rode on your first street car to your first roof here. Cornella looked squarely at the man. Because he was a stranger in the town, he became perceptibly less a stranger to her. And somehow his slight suggestion of shabbiness seemed to lessen the strangeness. Into her eyes flickered, not greeting, but an absence of non-greeting. "Yes," she answered.

He seemed to sense the faint loosening of acquaintance bars, and stepped an inch closer. "That certainly is a long line of cars," he ventured.

Cornella recognized the awe with which she used to regard long, snailing brown and yellow lines. "It is," she agreed politely, and her gaze scoured the coming platforms for room. She stepped toward one—fell back. The homing rush swarmed at the steps like hungry bees at a jar of molasses. And the eyes of those on the platform leered nasty superiority, hateful triumph at those who could not crawl on. Cornella sighed. "Too bad," said the man. And then:

"I say—" He hemmed, hawed, scraped an advance deprecatory cough from his thin white throat. "I know it isn't exactly regular, but this evening—don't be offended—"

"Certainly not!" crisped Cornella.

He stepped back instantly, abashed.

"I—I couldn't think of it," she added with a shade less crispness. He was so very abashed.

"I beg your pardon,"—humbly. "Only—when you don't know a soul in a strange town—"

But Cornella was wedging one foot on a platform that presented only a seventh as much wedging space as a foot

required. From the jammed seclusion, her eyes stretched back half-wistfully. But already the shabby straw hat was lost in a thousand, more or less, of its kind.

"I couldn't, though," Cornella argued with herself.

Two hours later, in front of the specked mirror, she renewed the argument. She was trying to twist her hair in a less plaintively neat knot. "Certainly, I couldn't. He—he might be a gambler! Only—" She pettishly pinned up tight the stubborn hair. Maybe Adeline would show her next noon.

Adeline the next day was as exuberant as a prize chrysanthemum. "Did I have an elegant time last evening?" she boasted. "Lawrence—don't you like that name? It goes swell with brown eyes—Lawrence certainly knows how to treat a girl right."

Cornella listened with less disapproval than she had betrayed on preceding occasions. But she asked primly: "What does the aunt with whom you live say?"

Adeline giggled merrily. "Oh,"—comfortably—"I told her that Lawrence's father was an old friend of my father's back in Indiana. She believed me,"—with brazen content.

"Some day," Cornella warned conscientiously.

"Forget it," yawned Adeline.

A week later Cornella saw him again while she waited in the crowd for a car. He smiled—bowed diffidently. "Well, it would be foolish," argued Cornella to her United Presbyterianism, "to pretend that you never laid eyes on the man before." Cornella bowed stiffly.

And immediately an incredibly roomy platform stopped in front of her. Cornella was conscious of a slight feeling of vexation as she stepped on. Many evenings, when she had been in a tired fever of hurry to get to supper and to bed, she had been compelled to wait and wait and wait. Hours! And now, when she wasn't in an especial hurry! She wished that her bow had been a shade more friendly. She had been so very crisp a week before that doubtless he wouldn't have the courage again—Cornella sighed. When she got off the car, she stopped in the little German bakery

for a jar of baked macaroni. She was vexed again. The baker was no longer there. A tall, melancholy Russian was proprietress, and her wares were as unkempt and distasteful as her hair, hands and scowl. Cornella sighed again. Life, it seemed, had resolved to yield her nothing—not even joy *en casserole*. Perhaps, after all, the Adelines who grabbed reckless handfuls of pleasure were wise.

The next day, Adeline was bubbling with merriment. "Such a joke!" she laughed. "When I told that Lawrence's father was an old friend of mine, I told the truth and didn't know it! Sure! We got to the confidential stage where we were doling out our pasts, and learned that our folks' back yards touched when we were learning our letters."

Cornella was nonplused. Why be particular when unparticularness traveled an unscathed way? For several evenings Cornella scanned the many waiting faces at State and Madison, even letting more than one not very crammed platform snail by. She was disappointed. Cornella's hair lapsed back to plaintive neatness.

Then she saw him again, shabby, diffident, ready to advance if she—Cornella shoved propriety aside, smiled friendlily at an unintroduced man, allowed him to help her on the crowded platform, into the crowded car—he had an unbelievable power of effecting a way through the jam—and then she chatted about the weather and the transportation system with a nonchalance that Adeline might have displayed.

In the next few days, Cornella forgot about obsequies. She took the wherewithal of several perfectly good fence panels and brought clothes. Not loud, but stuff that harked reminiscently back to the pink and lavender and azure frills of those long discarded figured lawns. And she succeeded, after many evenings of practice, in frilling her hair.

"Who is he?" asked Adeline the astute. "And when? Also where?"

Cornella grew pink. She didn't deny, but she didn't confess. After all, there was little to confess. Merely that she had chatted a few evenings on perfectly proper topics with a perfectly respectful man in the perfectly safe atmosphere of



Cornella suddenly felt a certain strangeness in the sag of the leather bag which hung from her wrist. It hung open and the small bill purse was gone!

a street car. Adeline would scoff—not at the irregularity, but at the tameness. Cornella herself wondered how long this proper tameness of proceeding would endure, and then grew alarmed at the thought of any deeper incursion into unconventionality. At least for a while.

Something—the United Presbyterianism, perhaps—had given Cornella a mighty respect for Romance. She pictured her as a comely, genteel old lady in decorous black gown and specs who owned a splendid but decorous habitation which you might enter only by courtesy of her invitation. Cornella felt guiltily that she—and Adeline—were sneaking in through a side entrance. And somehow, the entrance—perhaps because it was the side—lacked that thrill of pleasurable emotion which Cornella had expected would carpet it. And when the fingers of the man to whom she hadn't been introduced pressed hers in the kindly concealment afforded by a thoroughly filled car, Cornella tried valiantly to feel thrilled, and did not draw her hand away. And she was really thrilled when Adeline wonderingly remarked a few days later that she was getting younger. Cornella found her disapproval of Adeline rapidly melting, but she still had moments of contrition over her own fall from grace.

And then, unexpectedly, Adeline came down in the plainest of dresses, sans freakishness, sans rouge, bangs and beauty spots. She grinned over the sensation, but frankly explained, and Cornella, puzzled, got further insight into the ways of masculinity.

"Aint they the limit?" Adeline demanded with rueful mirth. "A fellow will pick out the classiest, niftiest, loudest chicken he can lamp, chase her for twelve months and three miles, and as soon as he gets a good hold on her arm and affections, it's, 'Say, dearie, I wish you wouldn't dress so loud! And for the Lord's sake, wipe off that paint. It throws a red shadow clean down the Loop!' If I hadn't been all dolled up, do you think Lawrence would have noticed me? Not on your life! Didn't he pass up all you neat skirts. And now it's, 'Adeline, please don't wear a patch under your eye. If you knew what the fel-

lows think of girls who wear 'em.'"

Adeline sighed resignedly and smoothed down her already smooth hair.

Cornella laughed. She didn't approve of Adeline's complexion, but she agreed resentfully that Lawrence had not dallied long with the natural-tinted femininity. "Tell him," she began—

"I can't," sighed Adeline. Her face flushed. Out of her shallow eyes faded the shallowness. In place came the light of love. "Because he's the only person left on the map that I'd like to suit. And,"—with prideful tenderness—"I made him give up cigarettes."

Cornella heard in silent amazement. And, hearing, Cornella was reassured. By all the laws and the precedents of outraged propriety, Adeline should have culled trouble. And instead, she had pulled the perfect flower of happiness. Romance, instead of resenting her sneaking intrusion by the barred side entrance, had come flying to help her kick down the bars; had apologized for the cobwebs cluttering that not-to-be-used door; had led her to the comfortable living rooms and was now begging her to consider it her home as long as she lived. Lucky Adeline!

The street cars were extraordinarily crowded that evening. They rocked with their overload of tired, swarming humanity. But the man to whom she had never been introduced wriggled a way through for himself and for her. Cornella had never seen anyone with such power of wedging through an unwedgable crowd. Inside, she put up a hand to straighten her hat. The other hung at her side. She felt his fingers closing over hers. Cornella flushed, and smiled more audaciously than she had ever smiled before. Cornella would never disapprove again of Adeline. How foolish to have been so stand-offish all these years—

Cornella suddenly felt a certain strangeness in the sag of the leather bag which hung from her wrist. Usually she held it tight under one arm, especially on pay nights, as this happened to be. But to-night she had neglected—Examination sent the blood from her cheeks. It hung open, and the small bill

purse was gone. She turned hastily to the man to whom she had never been introduced—and he was gone too! She stumbled, pushed, fought her way to the door. "Dunno," growled the conductor. "I can't keep track of everybody that gits off. People got to look out in these jams for their own property."

A dazed, heartsick Cornella rode home. The humiliation of it! Cornella ate no supper that night. Nausea prevented. It was not the loss of the money, though that was bitter enough and heart-breaking enough. But her puerile, fatuous, silly imaginings! The pressure of his fingers—those creeping, thieving fingers! Cornella felt hot, scalding shame roll over her. Oh, the difference between what she had mistaken that pressure for and what it had actually and meanly signified!

Various incidents and circumstances, unremarked at the time, recurred to her; his strange knack of wriggling through a crowd; the restless gleam—she had thought it diffident—of his slate-gray eyes; once he had edged furtively away as a policeman moved toward them; he had always hugged the compact center of the waiting crowd; twice on their car there had been a cry of "I'm robbed!" And he never rode the same distance any two nights; it was always a different street where he got off. She had thought him too diffident. She had been, in plain English, a fool!

As for Romance—Cornella laughed harshly. Oh, anyone can break into her house. But not into the comfortable living-rooms. There is the roof and the basement. The roof is cold, but you have a view of the stars, the twinkling lights of scattered homes and the silvery moon. Some people can make of their own dreams a blanket so fine and thick and warm that they do not mind the chill night air, and forget all else but the serene glory of the far-off stars and the shimmer of the distant moon. But these capable souls are few. The greater number hie themselves to the basement, which is warm enough, but dirty and dark and noisy, with loathsome rodents and crawling spiders. Cornella turned dry and hot, and then clammy and cold with loathing. She could feel

them crawling—ugh! If only she had kept to the clean, cold loneliness of the roof, even though she was not one of those who can cuddle under the coverlet of their own glowing fancies! She didn't cry herself to sleep. She lay fiercely awake all night.

In the morning, she presented, not the red eyes of one who has attended obsequies, but the gray-visaged countenance of the corpse.

"Got a headache?" asked Adeline, and forgot to wait for the reply. Adeline was joyously footing the cost of nine yards of white charmeuse satin, with the needed lace and frills and furbelows.

Cornella was too apathetic for envy. Coming out from the noisome basement of romance, the ordinary sunlight dazes you, and you walk and think and talk sluggishly. Cornella listlessly attended to customers, listlessly sorted remnants, and when the long day had dragged to its close listlessly sought State Street and Madison and waited for the chance to wedge a tired foot on a snailing platform.

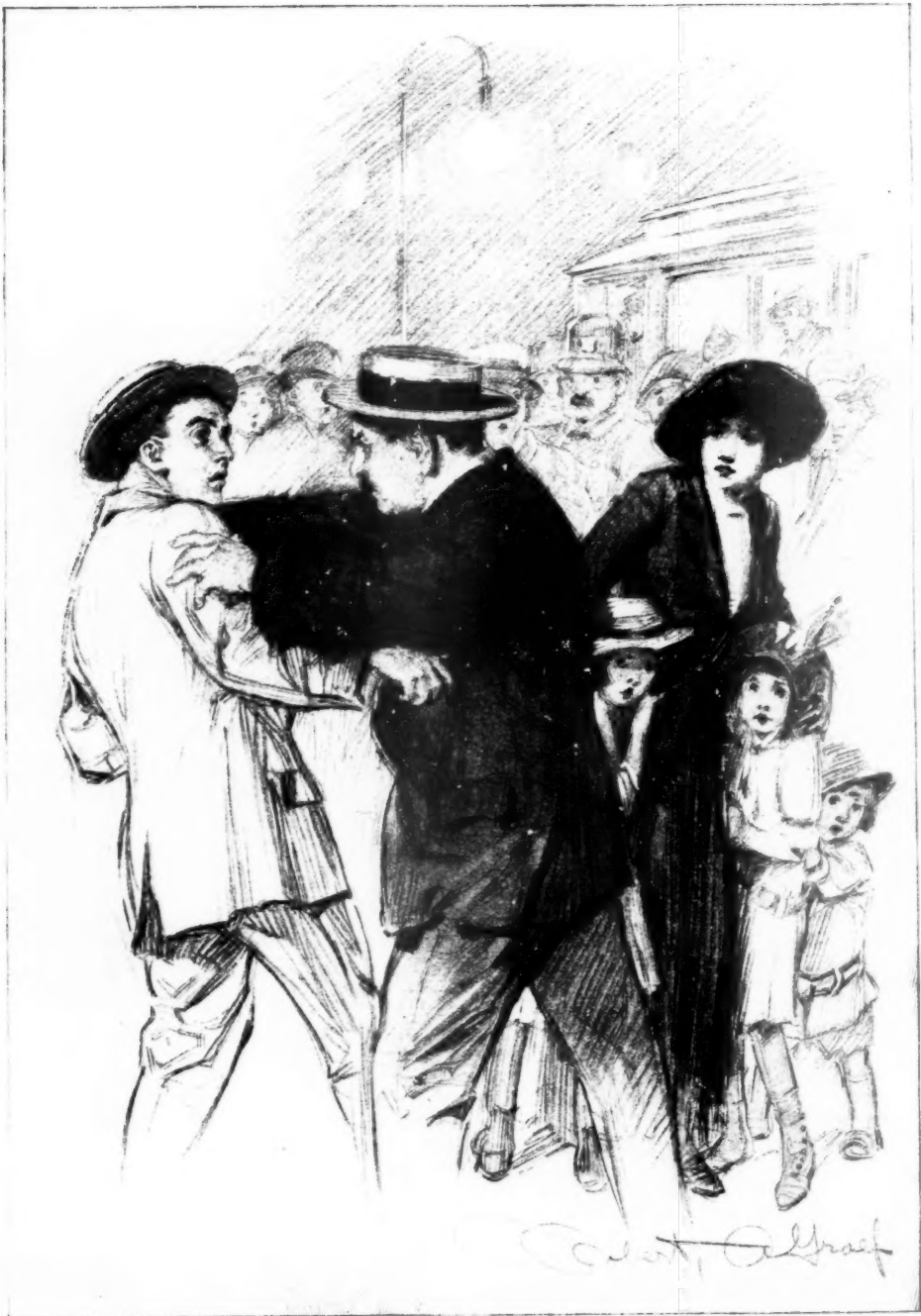
The platforms were very sluggish that night. Cornella waited inertly. And then dullness and inertness dropped from her. He was there! His restless eyes went hawk-like over the crowd—thief-like. Cornella's throat was dry. She hadn't realized it till now, but all night and all day she had nursed a tiny hope that perhaps she had been mistaken. Now, at sight of him, she felt the convulsive death throes of that hope. And when his eyes met hers—oh, if proof had been needed, she had it. They slunk from her gaze, sideways, down, and he moved to slink away.

Panting with sudden fury, Cornella hurried after him and overtook him.

"You robbed me—"

"Prove it," he sneered. The slate-gray eyes were taunting. And the familiarity of them was no longer strange. Why hadn't she recognized those fulvous eyebrows? that crafty gleam? Humpty Brown, the torment of her teens, grinned at her and dared her to expose him to the policeman ten feet away.

"What else d'ye expect?" sneered Humpty. "Picking up with strange men on the street?"



Poor Cornella! She stood there white with shame. She had no power of retaliation.

Humpy laughed. "I'm going to tell the folks back home," taunted Humpy.

"If—you do," choked Cornella. She was trying to mouth a deterring threat. But instead she framed a plea.

"Will I?" scorned Humpy, who was enjoying himself.

"At last I got you," said a pleasant, amiable voice, and a long, tweed-covered arm shot over Cornella's shoulder and clutched Mr. Humpy Brown, who promptly squealed.

Another arm followed, and Humpy, squealing and frothing, went into the embrace of a large, pleasant-faced, prosperous gentleman, who told the delighted crowd: "Every time I come to this corner I look for him. Six months ago he picked my pocket—but he wont pick no more,"—happily. And the large, pleasant gentleman continued, more happily, turning to Cornella: "If it hadn't been for you, I never would have seen him! But I saw you—and then,"—joyously,— "him!" And his compressive embrace tightened.

Cornella forgot to be ashamed. Cornella rubbed her eyes. It was the baker, and clinging to the tweed coat were the baker's three children, half-frightened, half-delighted at the entertainment provided for them. Cornella rubbed her eyes again. For the baker wasn't floury; his tweed suit was well-fitting, and, denuded of the voluminous white apron,

he was not any stouter than was seemy. And Cornella, listening to Humpy squeal for mercy, felt a most unholy, un-United-Presbyterian joy fill her soul.

A policeman edged near, and stood expectant. "She can identify me," bleated Humpy. "She knows me." His eyes threatened and appealed to Cornella's. But she didn't see them. For the baker's children, seeing the preoccupation of their father, had turned to her for hand-clinging protection. Floury? Not at all. They were radiantly clean and combed and sweet. And as their fingers curled hastily around Cornella's, she wondered joyously who had cared for them.

"Don't pay any attention to him," the baker advised the policeman. And the policeman didn't—any more than he would pay to a bale of hay that had to be tossed into a wagon.

Cornella, riding home with the baker's youngest child in her lap, and the baker beside her holding the other two, listened to a four-tongued account of the circus which they had just attended, heard how the small shop had given way to a big wholesale place, was told again that if the baker hadn't seen her face, he never would have caught the fellow, heard—

Being deeply imbued with a sense of propriety—more imbued than before—Cornella doubted her right to train three children in the way they should go. But the baker, who had a sense of humor, was willing to risk them with her.



Too Well Laid Plans

BY THOMAS
GRAY FESSENDEN



STEFAN POPOULOS bought a peanut-roaster. It was a second-hand affair of ancient model. It burned charcoal and it had on its top one of those shrieking, squealing, piercing little whistles which were much in vogue on peanut-roasters before civic pride and conscience became awakened and crusades against unnecessary noises were started.

Mr. Popoulos, being quite unaware of any civic spirit in such matters and not witting that he transgressed any municipal ordinance, filled the cylinder of his latest acquisition with something like a half-bushel of peanuts, stocked the fire-box with charcoal, ignited the latter and blissfully set his antiquated peanut-roaster before the door of his fruit-stand on Clark Street. He smiled blissfully and blandly as the ear-splitting shriek of the little whistle announced that the charcoal in the fire-box was in a fine and satisfactory state of combustion.

The whistle was going its loudest when Flint Dorsey turned into Clark Street. The unfamiliar shriek of the whistle greeted Mr. Dorsey's ear.

"Now, what have we here?" growled Dorsey, stopping before the fruit-stand. "Sure Clark Street aint what it was once; we all know that; and if ye'll be livin' on it, ye've gotta put up with all sorts of unholy yowlings and other noises. But a whistle on a peanut-roaster! 'Tis ag'in' the statutes. I'll speak of that to Mullen and see it comes off immejut."

Then Mr. Dorsey stopped short and his whole frame stiffened; for he had glanced through the windows of Mr. Popoulos' fruit-stand, and the sight he beheld was plainly not to his liking.

Stefan, having set the peanut-roaster in the doorway, had retired to the back room to supper, leaving to attend to such customers as might appear, his daughter Ena—a young goddess of eighteen, with the smoothest of cheeks and the blackest of hair and the brightest of heart-breaking eyes. And no sooner had Mr. Popoulos departed, than along had strolled young Emmett Dorsey, Flint Dorsey's son; and, being human—oh, very human—and otherwise susceptible to smooth cheeks and the blackest of hair and heart-breaking eyes, young Mr. Dorsey had strolled into Stefan's fruitery. What the elder beheld was his son and heir, leaning across a huge pyramid of oranges, conversing with and holding the hand of a Greek girl—just a common, ordinary Greek girl, whose father, not even yet enfranchised, owned the fruit-stand and the antiquated peanut-roaster with its offending whistle.

Young Mr. Dorsey seemed to be conversing very earnestly; also as he conversed there was a light in his eyes there was no mistaking—the light which takes no cognizance of race, creed, social position or any other obstacle. Ena Popoulos was listening with a heightened color in those smooth cheeks of hers and a most apparent indifference to the fact that Emmett Dorsey was openly squeezing her hand.

The elder Dorsey said something under his breath. It might have been "Heavens!"—but it wasn't. It was a shorter, more pointed and much more expressive word. He quite forgot the whistle on the peanut-roaster and the offense it had given his ears, innured as they were to the sundry and diverse noises of Clark Street.

Flint Dorsey stared at that picture behind the fruit-stand windows, and read all too plainly the unmistakable symptoms in those glances of his son at Ena Popoulos.

"So it's gone that far—has it?" he complained bitterly to himself. "He's went and lost his head like this. He'd be marryin' wit' a common little Greek girl

—a—a,"— here Mr. Dorsey glanced up at the name on the sign above the windows—"a Popoulos—would he? Him wit' his ways and his learnin' that might have his pick of anny forty girls I could mention—and takin' up like this wit' a Popoulos!"

He turned away and went along Clark Street, his head bent and his mind filled with bitter and disquieting thoughts.

This thing had got to stop; that much was certain. It must stop here and now. But Flint Dorsey had too shrewd a knowledge of human nature not to be aware that in things of this kind matters must be handled with gloves. Put your foot down, go to cutting off allowances or anything like that, and Emmett would elope with Ena Popoulos as sure as fate. That was the way of the unthinking young in their first love affairs. Cross them and you inevitably drove them together. No, the thing must be handled circumspectly; it must be done as Flint Dorsey had been used to doing things all his life—diplomatically. But stop, it must; there was never a doubt in his mind about that.

Flint Dorsey was a power in municipal politics; also he had acquired much money. He still lived in Clark Street, in the last of the old swell-front houses left in the encroaching march of crowded, teeming and so-called "model" tenements. He lived in Clark Street for purely political reasons. If it had not been for the game he played and the small fortune that its playing brought him each year, he would have moved from Clark Street long ago.

He mounted the steps of his house, let himself in with his latch-key, and, still engrossed with what he had just seen back at Stefan Popoulos' fruit-stand and the problem it raised for his solution, he began to pace up and down the length of the big and rather bare room which was dignified in that household and to his many friends by the designation of the "parly." Many another problem had been settled in that "parly," but never before one quite so intimate as this one in hand.

Long and thoughtfully, with bent head and the jerky, uneven stride he always used when he was deeply engrossed,

Flint Dorsey paced up and down, up and down.

At last he reached at least one satisfactory point in the progress of his planning.

"The way to do it," announced Dorsey to himself, "is to buy off the girl—buy her off in some way she don't know she's bein' bought off. I'll do a bit of scoutin' and find out if she's got anny ambitions or things like that. Ambitions is great things to play to in a case like this. I'll scout round and find out, annyway."

With Flint Dorsey, to think was to do. Before twelve o'clock that night he had discovered—by what circuitous route does not matter—that Ena Popoulos had an amazingly good voice; that she had expressed more than once a desire for a thorough musical training; that she had expressed the hope of some day startling the world with her work in opera; that Papa and Mama Popoulos shared all these hopes and sentiments with her; that Stefan was putting away what he could with an eye to giving his daughter the proper training; but that Stefan wasn't making any amazing fortune with his Clark Street fruit-stand, and that the discrepancies between what he could manage to save for this laudable end and what it would cost for Ena's training were enough to make a less patient or persistent man throw up his hands and relegate the whole thing to the overfilled limbo of impossible and impractical dreams.

All these things Flint Dorsey found out in a few hours; for he had certain infallible methods of finding out anything he wanted to about anyone at any time. That was a very necessary part of his business. One has to have such sources of information if one would play successfully the game Flint Dorsey had been playing for something over thirty years.

It was just after six o'clock the next evening, and the whistle on the peanut-roaster was doing its worst, when Dorsey came poking into Stefan Popoulos' fruit-stand. Stefan had just retired to the back room to supper and Ena was in charge. She was humming blithely to herself as she unwrapped the tissue from

some sleek grape-fruit and piled them in the usual pyramid on one of the low benches in the window.

Mr. Dorsey came in softly, cocking his head to one side and pretending to listen with great satisfaction to Ena's low humming.

"Are you aware, my child," said Flint Dorsey, "that ye have a rare gift in that voice ye're singin' wit' so free?"

Ena Popoulos, not having noticed him enter, jumped a good foot, dropped the grape-fruit in her hand and flushed beautifully.

Also she was much embarrassed in the presence of greatness; for even the daughter of a not-yet-enfranchised Greek knew Flint Dorsey by sight and what Flint Dorsey stood for with the powers that be.

"A foine voice! A rare, foine voice is that!" Dorsey declared with enthusiasm.

Ena pulled nervously at the bit of tissue in her fingers. She seemed tremulously pleased, tremulously hopeful, but sadly at loss, momentarily at least, for words.

"Ye should have that voice trained. Ye should have the best musical training ye can get," Dorsey declared. "I was listening to ye just now. That's why I come in. A voice, me dear—a voice like yours comes about once in a century, so I've read. There's no limits to what ye can do with it, if ye have the proper trainin'. Ye could no doubt sing with the best of the song-birds in opera if ye studied and studied right."

Ena made a nervous little throaty sound, indicative, seemingly, of her acquiescence with Flint Dorsey's views and her desires for the things he suggested.

"Would ye be willin' to work, if some one put up the money?" he asked.

"Would I?" she breathed, those dark eyes of her suddenly aglow.

"'Twould mean work—heaps of it," said Dorsey severely. "Ye'd have to be givin' up everything else—all frivolity and—and thoughts of anny young men and things like that. Would ye do that?"

"Would I?" breathed Ena again.

"Listen to me, then," said Dorsey. "You know who I am?"

Ena nodded.

"Well, I'm not the hard man that I'm

all too often pictured," he went on. "I want to help such as is deservin' of help. I love the ould precinct here. I like to see people go out of it and make good. We've give the world already two congressmen, wan governor, the best newspaper editor that ever worked for the people, and a champeen foighter. Now, belikes, we can give 'em a primy donner. If ye'll work, I'll furnish the money, for the ould precinct's sake if for nothing else."

There was an hysteric squeal of joy from Ena, a rush for the little room back of the shop where the Popouloses lived. Out came Stefan and fat Mama Popoulos. Stefan wrung Flint Dorsey's hand; Mama Popoulos fell on his neck and kissed him resoundingly. About this happy scene danced Ena, recounting the good luck that had befallen her—now in broken English, now in the Ionian tongue. The whistle on the second-hand peanut-roaster by the door screeched away quite unnoticed.

"Now ye want to get it through yer heads, all of ye," said Flint Dorsey oracularly. "the amount of work this means. It's up to her. There can't be none of the frivolities like other girls has—no distractions, no young men nor nothin' like that. I'll furnish the money; but she's got to work—*hard*. Get it?"

Ena made extravagant promises; Mama Popoulos dramatically backed them up; Stefan called on Heaven to witness that if his daughter did not appreciate this chance and make the most of it he'd "wreng her leet' neck," and he acted out this possibility with many baleful glares and much clawlike realism.

Flint Dorsey at length took his departure, much gratified.

Two days later, as he stood at the front windows of that one remaining swell-front house on Clark Street, he saw his son come out of Stefan's fruit-stand. Emmett came forth like a stricken thing. His brows were puckered; his mouth was drawn. Flint watched grimly, yet not without a twinge of pity, for Flint Dorsey was utterly bound up in that son of his.

"'Tis hard, no doubt," he reflected, watching Emmett come up the street.

"but he'll get over it; they all do in time, and 'tis best this way," he consoled himself.

But young Emmett Dorsey did not get over it as readily as his father thought would be the case. At the end of a year, despite the fact that in the meantime he had seen nothing of Ena Popoulos, Emmett was quite as taciturn and gloomy as upon that night he had come out of the fruit-stand with the sorrow of the ages seemingly written upon his face.

Those other girls that Flint Dorsey had imagined his son would in time turn to, once Ena was out of the way, Emmett Dorsey steadfastly and persistently ignored.

And then one ill-starred day Flint Dorsey slipped on the icy pavements, came down heavily with his left leg doubled under him, was taken back to Clark Street and stretched on a couch, while a doctor did frightfully painful things to the damaged leg and a nurse was summoned from the hospital.

It is neither an easy nor a pleasant thing for a man of Flint Dorsey's temperament to be tied to an easy chair in a big bare room while a compound fracture takes its own sweet time about mending, as was ever the way with compound fractures.

The days dragged horribly. The papers were never before so deadly dull. The nurse from the hospital—this was the third that had been summoned—was just as much a frightened bore as were the other two. Young Emmett was as cheerful to have about as a funeral. The "parly" where the injured man was established echoed to some strange and lurid language those days.

Then one afternoon the doorbell tinkled softly just at dusk. The hospital nurse parleyed with some one in the hall; then he came in and lighted three jets in the big chandelier. After him, her eyes shining softly, her cheeks red from the frosty air outside, came Ena Popoulos.

"I thought, maybe," she said shyly. "I might come and sing to you for an hour or so. You have paid for my training. It is only right I should do some

little bit in return to show my gratitude. Shall I sing for you? Would you care for it?"

She was very pretty as she stood there dubiously just inside the parlor doorway. Then she smiled. It was a very pretty and a very winning smile. Flint Dorsey hitched about in his chair. He made the nurse understand his presence wasn't absolutely indispensable.

"You're very good, very good, me dear," said Dorsey. "Yes, do lay off your things and sing to me. I'm—I'm lonesome."

"Oh!" said she pityingly. Then she flew across the room to his chair. Very daintily, still with that hint of shyness, she fixed the pillows at his back; very gently she smoothed his thick gray hair with her soft fingers.

"I have been trying to come before, but I was afraid you mightn't want me," said she. "I wish now I had. You have been so good to me."

There was an old square piano in one corner of the room. Its keys were yellowed; it was not in the best of tune. Ena settled herself on the faded plush stool, ran her light fingers over the keys and began softly in a rich low voice:

Come back to Erin, Mavourneen,
Mavourneen—

After that she sang other songs, whatever Flint Dorsey suggested. And then she came and sat close to him and talked to him, and fixed a bandage that hurt him—fixed it with a deftness and a gentleness that he wished the nurse from the hospital possessed—and smoothed the pillows at his back, and read him the whole of the sporting page in his favorite evening paper.

And then at last she was leaving and he was trying to thank her:

"Oh, no, no, no," she laughed. "It is I who should thank you for all you have done for me. This—this is so little, so very, very little. Shall I come to-morrow afternoon—a little earlier, perhaps?"

So Ena Popoulos came the next afternoon and the next and the next. Dorsey began to look for the time of her coming. He began to listen for the tinkle of the bell like an expectant child, and to

be very much disappointed if she were so much as a minute late.

Then one night after she was gone he began to think. He thought long and deeply.

"A Greek—hey! The daughter of a fruit-peddler—hey! Well, what of that? She's the finest little lady in the world," he mused.

He thought of her gentleness, her tact, her splendid voice when she sang. He realized how deadly dull the old house was without her—how deadly dull it had always been since his wife died.

"'Tis a woman that's needed around here," said he. "That's what it is! I hadn't realized it before—a woman—like Ena!"

He chuckled softly and forgot to swear at the nurse when he brought up the supper tray, and he fell asleep, smiling, over his tea and toast.

A woman—like Ena Popoulos—that was it. It was his last drowsy thought.

He cut the singing short next afternoon. He called Ena over to him. He made her sit on the arm of his chair.

"I've been thinkin'," said he with a sly wink at her, "about them tabooed young men, me dear. There wasn't to be anny young men so long as I was putting up the funds, was there?" said he.

"Why, no," said Ena, flushing a little.

"'Twas wrong of me—wrong of me," said he. "There's lots of things in the world that's better than a great voice and singin' in opera, aren't there? Oho, of course there are. So there *is* one still? Am I right?"

Ena Popoulos flushed more beautifully and turned away her eyes. There was a little affirmative bob of her head.

"Then call the restrictions all off," said Dorsey emphatically. "Marry him, me dear. Marry him right off."

"But my music—my voice—" Ena began doubtfully.

"Lave 'em go. Forget 'em," said he. "Marry the lad and make him happy, even as I know he'll make you happy—the fine lad that he is."

Ena was stroking his cheek. Her eyes were radiant.

"*You* advise me to give it all up and marry him?" she asked.

"I do," said he. "And the wedding-present I'll be givin' the two of ye that day," he went on with mounting enthusiasm,— "the fine big whale of a wedding-present—enough to kape the worry of money away from ye so long as ye live. And ye'll come and live here in the old house, wont ye? Ye wont mind lettin' me live with ye?"

"Come here and live?" asked Ena, drawing back a little doubtfully.

"Sure, here," Dorsey repeated.

"Oh," gasped Ena. "I don't know. I'm afraid Signor Ferroli—"

Dorsey straightened himself in his chair at the expense of of some frightful twinges in his leg.

"Signor Ferroli—" he began in bewilderment.

"Yes," said Ena with widening eyes. "Signor Ferroli—one of the teachers at the conservatory—the man you advised me to marry."

The front door had closed behind Ena Popoulos. The nurse from the hospital heard a terrific clatter and uproar in the parlor. He sped thither with all haste.

Flint Dorsey was catching up bottles from the little medicine table beside him and hurling them one after another smashingly against the bricks of the wide fire-place. And as he hurled them, Flint Dorsey was calling himself frightfully ingenious and lurid names.

A Tangle in Bigamies



Liza turned and fled

SUNLOVER SAM MARRIES AN EXTRA WIFE AND CHAPERONS AN EXTRAORDINARY SUIT IN COURT.

By Harris
Dickson

Author of "Old Reliable,"
"Sunlover Sam," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY
GAYLE HOSKINS

A FEBRUARY sun glittered upon Evangeline Plantation, but it lacked sincerity and warmth. The store gallery extended to the edge of the road, where three mules shivered at a hitching rack with their patient eyes fixed on the door. Around the store lay bare and deserted fields, brown with last year's cotton stalks. No whirring came from the gin; no song uprose from the field; no cattle browsed in the pastures. Human-kind kept within doors and four-footed creatures sought protection in the cane-brake. The road—a streak of black paste, too thick for skiff-riding and too thin for mule-back navigation—skirted the lake bank between the fences and the water.

The elder of two negro riders jerked his mule until she floundered out of a mud hole and planted her feet on firmer ground. "If this road was leading me straight to Old Nick, I'd be powerful glad to get there," he declared.

"I don't care whar dat fire's at; I

wants to warm my foots," Sunlover Sam chattered between his snapping teeth. Sunlover Sam—now sailing under the name of Andy Atkins—listened to his mule's feet popping as they pulled out of the mud, and Sam kept grumbling. "Wish't I done stayed ter home wid my wife—an' me aint been married a week!"

It was many a mile to Alabama, whence Sunlover had departed in the night, leaving behind, his name, his first wife and two little girls. Sam was glad he'd come to Mississippi, and glad that Liza hadn't—else he might not have married so punctually into such a prosperous family. The head of that prosperous family reined his mule with, "No need to growl—our business must be 'tended to. You told me you was a farmer, an' a hard-workin' man; come along, we are mighty nigh there."

Plez Crawford, the aforesaid head of the family, sat his mule like a cavalryman, shifting from side to side in the road, and avoiding the mud holes. He was an old-timer, upwards of sixty,

square built and broad shouldered. His comparative accuracy of speech and easy manners came from years of association with his former master. These, with straight brown features and a long gray beard, gave him an air of dignity most unusual in a negro.

Plez dismounted, hitched his mule to the rack, and covered her carefully with a blanket. The wind blew his beard against his breast, just as the tails of those wind-lashed mules swished against their shuddering sides. "Huh!" said Plez. "I wonder how those niggers in the store would like to be tied out here

in this cold." Scraping his feet to a nicety, Plez mounted the steps, opened the big glass door and went in. "Good mornin', Mr. Banks," he said politely to the clerk.

"Hello, Uncle Plez; you didn't ride all the way from Willow Point on a day like this?"

"Yes, sir, Mr. Banks; I had business an' couldn't tarry at home; but it's mighty bad ridin'—an' the fire feels good. This is my new son-in-law, Andy Atkins. We wants to see the Cap'n."

"Back yonder." The clerk indicated a glazed-in corner at the rear which



"Yas, suh, I 'spioned dey warn't actin' honest."

served the owner of Evangeline Plantation for his private office. Plez moved closer to the glowing stove, while the other negroes made room for him. "How is you-all to-day?" he asked.

"Po'ly, thank God," replied Uncle Joe Darter, which expressed their unanimous sentiment. Sunlover stretched his hands to the grateful heat, then

turned his back. "Reckon it's jes about as cheap to git warm all the way 'round," he remarked pleasantly, paving his way to a better acquaintance with the Evangeline tenants.

"Come along, Andy." Plez led his recent son-in-law to the office. Captain Willoughby Porter looked up and beckoned the old man to enter. "Good mornin', Uncle Plez; I haven't seen you in a coon's age. Take that chair and chunk up the fire."

"Good mornin', Cap'n." With the privilege of an old friend, Plez Crawford shook hands. Sunlover had got inside that room and shut the door on himself before recognizing in the planter a man whom he had fleeced out of two hundred dollars in Vicksburg, on pretense of moving his family from Alabama to Evangeline. Sam had been semi-innocent and put up to the trick by a pair of rascally labor agents, who went to jail; and although he had given back the money without arousing the Captain's suspicion, Sam couldn't help being fidgety. "Huh!" he thought, "Cap'n don't know me no more'n I knowed him at fust."

While in Vicksburg, Captain Willoughby Porter had seemed the immaculate gentleman of leisure, with dangling eye-glasses and white vest—the kind who never struck a lick of work between meals. At home he wore a suit of rusty corduroy, mud-splashed leggins and a wide felt hat. If it hadn't been for those eye-glasses with their black silk cord, Sam might not have recognized him at all. That's what reminded Sam, made him sit close to the fire and hold his tongue. Old Plez put a log on the fire and settled down to do his talking. "Cap'n, I wants to move over here an' live with you."

"What's the matter, Plez? I thought you were satisfied on Lake Beulah?"

"No, suh, Cap'n, I aint been satisfied since the old Judge passed away. I couldn't get used to seeing strangers settin' in his chair an' proppin' their feet against the posts of his gallery. Me an' the new manager didn't gee. So I moved to Willow Point Plantation, an' that warn't no better. You see, Cap'n, we old-time folks gets sot in our ways, an'

'pears like it's mighty hard to change. You was a mighty good friend to the Judge; we can get along together."

Captain Porter appreciated the old man's feelings and respected them. Plez Crawford had belonged to Judge Crawford, and when the plantation fell into alien hands, Plez could never accustom himself to alien ways.

"Well," asked the Captain, "how did you come out this year on Willow Point?"

"Just about broke even. Had a little bit over after paying my rent and store account. But that aint it, Cap'n; I can work hard and make money anywhere. A nigger oughtn't to be carryin' tales about white folks, but they's curious people on Willow Point. If they give a nigger something to eat, they charges him two bits for it. I never was used to such as that. The Old Judge would say, 'What do you mean sloshing around here without your dinner; get back to that kitchen, quick, an' tell Dinah to fix you a plate.'"

Captain Porter laughed. The new owners of Willow Point were strangers to the country and had no experience with negroes. Presently he inquired, "What family have you?"

"Nobody 'cept my wife, Hurlda, and two boys; one's fourteen; the other's sixteen. My oldest girl, she's teachin' school in Carthage." Uncle Plez mentioned this fact very proudly.

"Your wife must be getting old? And not able to do hard work?" The negro grinned with his whole line of perfect teeth. "No, sir, Hurlda's a *young* woman; she can do a day's work with the best hand on Evangeline."

"Are you in debt?"

"Don't owe a cent; here's my receipt. Our family never takes up much from the store. I raises my own meat, enough corn for four mules, and some to sell. I've got cows and make a little butter for sale. Got plenty hogs, an' chickens an' eggs."

Captain Porter waved aside the receipt; such a thrifty negro would never be in debt. "Well, Plez, I'm pretty near filled up; just brought over ten new families from Kossuth County, Alabama—"

Sunlover glanced around with quick apprehension; Kossuth County was getting uncomfortably near his old home; some of those fool negroes might recognize him.

"But, of course," the planter went on, "I'll have to provide for you. There's a four-room cabin on the front, and I could let you have thirty-five acres adjoining it."

"We need seventy acres, Cap'n."

"Seventy?"

"Yes, sir, fifty for me an' my family, an' twenty for my son-in-law an' his wife—Andy's a *mighty* good farmer."

Captain Porter glanced carelessly at the well-recommended son-in-law, and, to Sam's intense relief, without a gleam of recognition. "He's a strong young fellow an' twenty is all right for them; but you can't work fifty."

"Yes, sir, I can; I don't 'low those young niggers of mine to fool around; I make 'em git up an' git."

Plez spoke with such assurance that the boss consented. "Very well, you can try fifty." Captain Porter was beginning to understand more clearly why Plez Crawford held his head higher and could afford to wear better clothes than the generality of his kind.

Sunlover kept a-studying and a-studying. He got up and rambled out to the stove, with both eyes skinned for Alabama niggers. "Some of you folks jes lately come from Alabama?"

"Yes, got tired scratchin' gravel an' fillin' gulleys; come out here whar we kin make some money."

"Who-all was it what come?"

A young black man named Marsh Webster pointed out the newcomers, and called a lot of unfamiliar names, which soothed, but did not entirely pacify Sam in his mind; negroes frequently changed their names in moving, and for other diplomatic reasons—as Sam had done. "I don't know none o' them; but we'll git 'quainted." And Sam strolled back to the private office.

The boss was bending over a printed form of tenant's contract, filling out the blanks. "Take this with you, Uncle Plez, and read it carefully so you'll know what you are signing."

"That's right, Cap'n; a good under-

standin' makes long friends. Now fix up another one for Andy."

"Oh yes, the twenty-acre tract. What's his name?"

"Andy Atkins."

Captain Porter wrote down the name and sat for a moment regarding it; something that had passed out of his mind seemed to be coming back. Sunlover saw it coming and turned away his face as the Captain wheeled, "You say your name is *Andy Atkins*?" The planter's eye lighted. "I thought I'd seen you somewhere. You came to me at the Hotel Carroll."

"Praise de Lawd!" Sam leaped to his feet. "I sho is proud to ketch up wid you ag'in. Dem town niggers tried to git me in a humbug, knowin' I come from de country."

"They came pretty near swindling us, didn't they, Andy?"

"Yas, suh, *dat* dey did. I 'spicioned dey warn't actin' honest an' said to myself, sez I: 'I'm p'intedly gwine to give dat white gent'man back his money, ef it's de *las'* thing I do; he treat me so nice.'"

Captain Porter turned to old Plez and explained: "Those labor agents in Vicksburg were making a cat's-paw of Andy to get money from planters who wanted labor."

Plez chuckled. "Town niggers studies up all manner o' devilment. I wont stay in Vicksburg no longer than I got business. That's where I met Andy, an' he took such a shine to my girl Veta; they got married las' week."

"Married?" It was on the tip of Captain Porter's tongue to question Andy about the wife and three half-grown boys whom Andy had agreed to move from Alabama. But the planter was too considerate, in view of this more recent matrimony.

"Bless my soul," Sam congratulated himself aloud, "here I is, got on de *very* plantation, an' de *very* kind o' white folks I wants to live wid. Sho is better to be born lucky dan rich."

"Yes, and you might find some of your old friends amongst these Alabama people."

"Dat would be mighty nice, *mighty* nice—" Sam resolved that it would be

nicer to see everyone of these Alabama negroes before they got a sight of him.

"Now, Cap'n," said Plez, "there's one more thing; then we'll be ridin'. I needs a hundred and fifty dollars to buy a new mule; old Julie died this last gone Saturday—best mule I had. I likes to pay cash, 'cause credit prices are so high."

Captain Porter smiled to himself; this sounded so like the time-worn game that negroes worked on planters who were over-anxious for labor. Usually it would be ten, fifteen, or twenty dollars; any planter would take that much chance in the hope of securing a tenant. Then he would never see the negro, or the money again. But he was dealing with a responsible man. So he opened the safe and counted the money into Plez Crawford's hand.

"Thank you, Cap'n; I'll begin moving just as soon

as we can pull over these roads," said Plez.

Six weeks later the warmth of middle March had come into the air. Everywhere the plows were breaking up land for a new crop. Negroes had thawed out; they no longer crawled around like sick flies clinging to a window pane.

Plez Crawford stepped into his rightful place as the leader of the Evangeline tenants. He went about his improvements with a vim that made their heads swim. Fences rose in a night; pig-pens grew by magic; a woven wire fence enclosed his chicken yard. The congregation chose him deacon in the church. On his first official Saturday, Deacon Crawford conscripted the entire membership, to put on a new roof. "Nobody goes to the store until this job is



"Huh! 'twarn't no pleasure goin' to dat funeral!"

finished," he announced. Those negroes sawed and hammered and laughed; merrily they nailed on the last shingle by lantern light, and relished the novelty of their unusual labor. By acclamation the Knights of Solomon elected Brother Plez Crawford to the exalted position of Noble President. Within three months, by common consent, he had become the lead-mule and bell-cow, not only of Evangeline Plantation, but for all the territory contiguous thereto.

With Sunlover Sam—otherwise Andy Atkins—affairs ran mellow as his marriage bells, until he came face to face with Liza, the ex-wife, supposed to be in Alabama. Sam did not intend to come face to face with Liza anywhere; and he wouldn't, if it hadn't been for that narrow path through the canebrake where neither of them could see around the corner. Suddenly they stood staring at each other, with big white bulging eyes—just for the fraction of a moment, when the woman whirled and fled. Sam stopped in his tracks and listened to Liza tearing through the cane. "Pears like she warn't seekin' none o' me!" He sat down on a rotten log and tried to figure out the puzzle. "Thar's one thing certain for shore: Liza aint come dis fer ways by her *lone* self."

Which was the truth, as Sam's prudent inquiries subsequently developed. Liza had emigrated as "Mrs. Marsh Webster." Sam cherished no resentment against Eliza, and Eliza bore no grudge against him; when they learned that neither was hunting for the other, both were willing to meet as friends—great friends, growing jovial over the propitious outcome of a situation which might have proved awkward. "Liza, I tell you how 'tis," said Sam: "white folks can't do nuthin' to niggers, 'cep-tin' de niggers squabbles 'mongst dey-selves and gits to talkin'." Which cinched their mutual silence.

All shades of colored opinion agreed that Brother Tiberius Giddings, newly deceased Past Noble President of the Knights of Solomon, was going to enjoy the most delightful funeral ever pulled off in the Evangeline neighborhood. The Lodge demanded that every brother

do his duty, from the sporadic band at the head of the procession, to the satisfactory manner in which the widow was expected to "take on" at the grave. The Noble President, Brother Plez Crawford, had perfected all plans and specifications. Not a carping sister could think of a criticism or an improvement. "Brudder Crawford sho do know how to run a fust-class funeral," they all agreed.

"Dat's the Lawd's troof; dese country niggers gwine to git a tech o' high life when dey sees *dis* buryin'."

On Saturday night, everything that could walk, crawl, or be carried in arms flocked to the church, where all minor details of the funeral were to be discussed. The Noble President sat with left elbow resting upon his knee, leaving his right hand untrammelled for emphatic gestures. A double circle of black faces looked at his long gray beard.

Sis Edmonia Dorkins rose and spoke. "I'm mighty proud o' dis cold weather." Sis Edmonia recalled a certain previous function and sniffed at the odorous comparison.

"You-all 'members de time when us buried Elder Hopewell? I never tarried to do no pickin', not *dat* day, jes flung my cotton sacks in de seed house an' grabbed my sash. It was 'long todes de middle o' September an' de weather was brillin'. Dey done saved dat fat parson from Chuseday, plumb 'till de next comin' Sunday, an' dat wont never do, not in summer time. It spiles de bes' funeral. Soon as I poked my nose in church, I knowed p'ticklar dat twouldn't do, 'special when dem niggers crowded so thick aroun' de remains. Huh! twarn't no pleasure goin' to dat funeral."

"The Worshipful Guardeen is right." The Noble President referred so deferentially to Sis Edmonia, that she sat down quite content. "Howsomever," he proceeded, "Brother Giddings deceased on Friday, an' the weather aint turned warm yet. Now then, brothers and sisters,"—thoughtfully his eyes swept that double circle of black faces.—"Sunday is the most proper day for this funeral; we couldn't wait till Tuesday an' take forty plow-hands from the field. On

Sunday, brethern from Willow Point, Deer Lake, Woodacres, every one o' those plantations up and down the lake, they can join us. The procession will form over yonder in front of the old gin—"

"Dat wont do," Uncle Joe Darter broke into the arrangement, "dat wont do, 'cause dey wont git no chance to march—none a-tall."

A hundred pairs of feet began to shuffle on the floor, restless with a universal craving to march; two or three brothers sprang up. The Noble President waved them down—all except Marsh Webster, who continued to stand. The Noble President smiled like a born leader, who has thought of, and provided against every objection.

"As I forestated," he went on, "we form in front of the old gin and marches down the big road, *away* from the church, till we come to the pasture gate. That lets the Grand Marshal line up the parade like a first-class funeral *ought* to be lined up: there's the band in the lead, the Noble President, Worshipful Guardeen, an' officers in wagons, then the hearse with pall-bearers on both sides in white gloves, one hand on de breast and one behind. All brothers and sisters keep step two by two. Remember, no crowdin'—string out and make a show."

"We turns through the pasture gate, marches down to Wiley Evers' seed house, and left wheel through the wood lane. After the band has played two or three pieces, they starts up the dead march and marches back to the church, 'way off yonder by Sid Weatherspoon's cut o' new ground."

"Aint dat gran'!" exclaimed Sis' Edmonia. "An' po' ole Brudder Giddings aint here to see it. He always did love a fust-class funeral."

The objector sat down; the kickers were silent. Marsh Webster took his seat and Liza stuck out her lip because nobody would listen to Marsh's say.

"Veta, dat Liza is one *mean* nigger 'ooman," said Sunlover, but he immediately wished he hadn't nudged his new wife and made the two women look at each other. He got a hunch, but kept it to himself. "Huh! Liza's sp'ilin'

fer trouble. She been had a prejudice ag'in' me all dis month; wonder what ails dat 'ooman."

Sam was sitting next to Dave Rencher, whose little boy, Sojer, rushed in from the front and wriggled to his father's knees, whispering, "Oh, Pappy, Pappy, de constables is comin': dey's out yonder right now." In all that hubbub of discussion Dave couldn't hear the boy. Sojer's shrill voice rose until everybody was bound to hear him: "Constables is comin' for a man what's got *two wives*." Twenty negroes perked up their ears and started to run; Sojer's next bit of information reassured them:

"He's a man what jes moved here from Willer Pint,"—which eliminated the Alabama contingent, and others.

"How do you know, son?" Dave shook the boy.

"I heerd 'em 'quirin' of a white man out yonder in de big road. Dar dey is! Dar dey is!" The excited child stood up on his father's knee and pointed to the door. Two white men were looking in. Sunlover felt that his call had come, and ducked behind the mourners' bench. "I *knowed* it, I *knowed* it; Liza's done tole."

Most of the negroes rose in a panic and crowded towards the back door, where another white man appeared. "Stand back," he ordered.

Sunlover figured on making it to the window and getting out, but those niggers were wedged in so tight, he could never squeeze through and throw up a sash. "Lemme go, Veta, lemme me go." His wife clung on like a fool and held him back.

The Noble President did a peculiar thing, and tempted Providence. He got clear of the huddle, and every negro watched him walk quietly down that middle aisle. "Howdy do, Mr. Kimball—howdy do, Mr. Alec; please, sir, gentlemen, don't scare these niggers. Does you want anybody in here?"

"Yes, we want *you*." And the shining nippers snapped upon his wrists.

The old man stood quite alone, fronting those officers of the law, perfectly silent and erect in a dazed, gray-bearded dignity. "Mr. Kimball, is you-all gentlemen *arrestin'* me?"

"Yes; we've got a warrant." Which Kimball proceeded to read.

"That's all right; I'll go 'long without no papers."

The surging of panic-stricken people had separated Hurlda from her husband; she broke from the crowd like a loose stone at the edge of the avalanche. "What ails you, Plez?"

"These gentlemen wants me to go to town."

"What for?" the woman demanded.

"Mr. Kimball read something off o' that paper, but I didn't get the straight of it."

Hurlda turned to the deputy. "What is Plez did, Mr. Kimball?"

"Bigamy case."

"Bigamy! Bigamy? What does dat mean?"

"That's what they call it when a man marries two wives."

"*Shore nuff*, white folks?" Hurlda looked to the black, uncomprehending faces which surrounded her, then turned again: "Lordee, white folks, you-all is jes prankin' wid Uncle Plez?"

The negroes burst into a laugh until Kimball drew his prisoner to the door. "Come along, old man; we must be getting back to town."

"All right, boss, but"—Plez glanced miserably at his shackled hands—"I aint never had such as this put on me before."

Hurlda stepped out into the road and sent a barefoot boy flying for Captain Porter. A group of Alabama tenants whispered together. "I'm gwine straight back home," Marsh Webster announced; "they don't 'low no sech as dis in Alabama—'resting a nigger for havin' two wives, jes de same as if he done been fightin'."

A horse galloped up; Captain Porter threw his reins to a boy, and the negroes made way for him. "What's all this trouble about? What do you mean, Kimball, arresting one of my tenants without saying a word to me?"

"I didn't know he was a tenant of your," Kimball apologized; "we thought he lived on Willow Point, and a woman told us that he would be here to-night at this meeting."

"What is the charge?"

"Bigamy."

"Bigamy!" Captain Porter snorted in disgust, and drew the deputy aside. "You'll scare every negro out of the country if you commence arresting them for things like that."

"Yes, sir, Captain, I know it; but the Grand Jury indicted him, and we've got to execute the warrant."

"Who was on that Grand Jury?"

"Some of those new men in the Willow Point neighborhood forced the indictment. They can't understand these negroes or make allowances."

"What witnesses did they have?"

"Only one—a woman named Sally Mag—"

"Sally Mag!" Hurlda's keen ears caught the name. "I knowed twarn't nobody but dat Sally Mag; Cap'n, it's jes a passel o' nigger news."

"See, here, Kimball," Captain Porter suggested, "there's no need of taking this old man to town. Go up to the store and telephone the sheriff that you have left him in my charge. We'll appear at court whenever the Sheriff lets me know."

"That's perfectly satisfactory; telephone him yourself. Hope you wont have any hard feelings against me."

"None at all, Kimball; but I don't like to see my tenants stirred up about nothing."

Plez Crawford's affair was in the hands of his boss and he never spoke a word, not even when Kimball unlocked the handcuffs and the two deputies rode away.

"Cap'n, Cap'n!" Sis' Edmonia tugged at the planter's elbow. "Please, sir, don't let dis here rookus gum up our funeral. Heap o' dese new niggers is fixin' to run away to-night, an' we's scared we wont have nobody to march in de peerade."

"Fixing to run away? What for?"

"Yas, suh, dey aint gwine to stay on no plantation what's got dese new fangled notions."

Captain Porter failed to see the humor of this. It would be no joke for a stampede to break out among his tenants. He strode to the head of the aisle. "Sit down, *everybody*," he said. "Listen to me—especially you Alabama people. These Evangeline hands know that my



Every negro watched the Noble President walk quietly down the middle aisle. "Howdy do, Mr. Kimball—howdy do, Mr. Alec; please, sir, gentlemen, don't scare these niggers. Does you want anybody in here?"

tenants are my friends and I'll stand by them. Plez Crawford is not coming to any harm."

"Can we go 'long with the parade?" Plez inquired.

"Yes, have your funeral; march around and enjoy yourselves."

"Dar now!" shouted Sis' Edmonia; "I tole you-all folks dat Cap'n warn't pay-in' no attention to nigger news. I wants to know who else got any business med-dlin'."

In spite of Sis' Edmonia's optimism, tiny undercurrents of uneasiness went trickling through every cabin where black folk whispered with each other concerning Plez Crawford's extraordinary lawsuit.

The day of trial came. Long before sun-up, Plez Crawford warmed himself beside the stove in Captain Porter's kitchen. Half a dozen friends straddled their mules at the big gate, waiting for the boss to ride. Meanwhile, an early-morning lamp burned in Captain's library, where Sunlover reported the gossip and the facts he had gathered about Sally Mag. "She jes nacherly got a prejudy ag'in' Hurlda, an' don't care what she do. Dem white folks sicked her on to dis 'cause Uncle Plez moved offen deir place."

"All right, Andy; not a word to anybody. Hurry up and do exactly what I told you." Sunlover hustled; he didn't like the sound of "bigamy;" it was cutting mighty close to his own coat tails.

A little after nine o'clock, Captain Willoughby Porter puffed up the courthouse steps with Plez Crawford stamping behind him. Plez halted outside the door. "Cap'n," he inquired, "is I got time to buy that wire? I wants to get my fence strung before night."

"Better let that fence alone for a while."

"But, Cap'n, my wagon is at the gate, and I wants to get that wire started on the road."

"You attend to this lawsuit, or the judge might start you on the road."

"I aint payin' no attention to that lawsuit." Plez strode in, holding his

head mighty high; for Plez had a lawsuit and all the other negroes were observing him—especially Sally Mag. Sally Mag was glaring from a rear bench, with her back braced against the wall and her teeth set in unshakable resolution. Plez passed without looking at the woman. "I aint payin' her no mind," he muttered.

In the consultation room they found Major Briscoe poring over a law book. Plez regarded the litigation settled, when he learned that Major Briscoe was to defend him—the Major's deep voice and sizzling Briscoriation of Sally Mag being tantamount to a verdict of "not guilty."

"Howdy do, Major."

"Howdy, Plez." The Major's exceedingly low-cut vest utterly failed to contain a pleated and much wrinkled shirt. The customary lightning failed to flash in the Briscoe eye, and the thunderbolts were missing from his voice. "Willoughby, I'm afraid of a little hitch in getting this case dismissed."

"How so? Have you talked with Henshaw?"

"Yes! Henshaw doesn't want to prosecute, but he can't help himself. That woman is hell-bent on prosecuting, and wont budge out of the court-room. If she were not here Henshaw would enter a nol. pros."

"Can't you stave off a trial?"

"We have no grounds for a continuance, and our Judge is cranky about keeping his docket clear."

"Let Plez plead guilty; I'll pay the fine."

"The court can't fine him—it's penitentiary, or nothing."

Plez strolled to the window and was calling to his son on the wagon. "Wait a while, son; I'm comin' right now to get that wire."

"We've got to do something," urged the Captain; "call Henshaw and make him fix it up."

"Howdy, Mr. Henshaw," Plez greeted the District Attorney. "How's Miss Sue?"

"Everybody well; how's all your family?"

"Doin' fine, thank you, sir."

"Look here, Henshaw"—Porter made

no bones about what he wanted,—“you must dismiss this case against Plez.”

“Captain, I’ve known that old man all my life; he used to take me hunting when I was a boy. His indictment has troubled me more than Plez.” Henshaw’s face, compared with that of Plez, proved this. “It’s a plain case; Gersty is backing this woman. There they are, in the court-room, clamoring for a trial. What can I do when the marriage register shows two licenses and two marriages, Sally Mag Jenkins on April 22nd, 1910, and Hurlda Simmons on October 17th, 1910.”

Plez burst out triumphantly: “That’s right, Mr. Henshaw; that’s percisely what I told the Captain, them *very two days*. I got a *good* remembrance. I aint even forgot the day I married Artemise, fourth of August, 1907, on a Sunday. When it comes to Ella, I disrecollect whether ’twas in January or February. But I knows ’twas shortly after Christmas, before the folks commenced breaking up ground.”

All three white men stared at him; Briscoe suggested quickly: “Artemise got a divorce?”

“Yes, sir,” Plez chuckled: “Artemise was a stylish woman. She would break her neck to keep up with Sister Luvinia. Luvinia had some divo’cement papers framed an’ hung up in her house. Nuthin’ would suit Artemise until she got *her* some papers just like Luvinia’s, in a gold frame. Ella warn’t carin’ for such as that. She got a big-road divorce—took her foot in hand and left for Loozianny.”

Henshaw shrugged his shoulders helplessly. “I’ll speak to the Judge and do what I can. The case will be called immediately after dinner.”

Plez got up again and walked restlessly to the window. “Cap’n, I don’t like that; it’s goin’ to put me behind with my wire fence.”

“Going to put you behind the bars.” Porter was outdone.

Sunlover Sam shoved through the crowd of negroes; Captain Porter could hardly wait until he reached the consultation room. “Well, Andy,” he asked, “what about Sally Mag?”

“Jes like I tole you; de nigger what

she married last fall, he used to loaf around Vicksburg; I knows him real good; he goes by name of Eddie Moran. Nelson Griggs, what she had befo’ Plez Crawford, I fotch him to town wid me.”

“What did Sally Mag say?”

“Never said nothin’ until Eddie got her befo’ that little red-headed lawyer. Eddie don’t love to mix-up in no cote-house scrape.”

“Did you tell her that we knew about her other husbands?”

“Sally Mag aint denyin’ *none* of ’em; she ’low when she got married to Uncle Plez, her husband done been gone to Loozianny more’n two months. Twarn’t no fault of hern ef he come ramblin’ back jes soon as cotton pickin’ time was over wid.”

Major Briscoe glanced meaningly at his friend when Sunlover spoke of taking Sally Mag to that red-headed lawyer’s office. “What have you been doing? Tampering with State’s witnesses?”

“No, suh, I aint tampered none; aint *never* tampered.”

“Did you threaten that woman, or try to scare her off?”

“No, suh, not me. I aint said *nary word* to dat ’ooman, ’ceptin’ de boss was fixin’ to put her in de pentencherry ’longside o’ Uncle Plez. She wanted to know would Hurlda go too, an’ I tole her, no, Hurlda warn’t in dis. Eddie Moran say, ‘Less get away from here, Mag.’ Dat’s when Sally Mag sot in to do her mores studyin’.”

Major Briscoe smiled grimly and hurried out to the clerk’s office, coming back with a paper in his hand. “Here’s three marriages on record against Sally Mag Jenkins: Nelson Griggs, June 14th, 1906; Plez Crawford, April 22nd, 1910; Eddie Moran, December 25th, 1910.”

Captain Porter sprang up eagerly. “Nelson Griggs is still alive. Andy brought him to town; her marriage to Plez Crawford must be illegal. That let’s us out, doesn’t it?”

“Unfortunately, no.”

“But she is guilty of bigamy just as much as he is?”

“Certainly she is.”

Sunlover forgot himself and pounded his big fist on the table so hard that it called Plez back from the window: "Dat's jes what I tole her," Sam burst out. "Sally Mag 'sputed my word an' say twarn't no sech thing as wimmen biggimy; she 'low dat's for men, like votin', an' sech. Sally Mag ack mighty uppity 'till dat red-headed lawyer got through wid her; den she sot on a lower limb. Dat's when de notion hit her to go to dat levee camp in Arkansaw, whar dey don't have no biggimy."

Captain Porter turned to Briscoe. "What is the law in a case like this?"

"Blest if I know. Plez, who was your first wife?"

"Sarah. I married Sarah during the big yellow fever. She died ten or eleven years ago."

"Then you married Sally Mag?"

"No, sir; my next wife was a bright-skinned woman named Miranda; she followed one o' those jackleg preachers, plumb to Tennessee."

"Did you get a divorce?"

"No, sir; Miranda was gone, an' I jes let it all go at that."

"How long has she been absent?"

"Right smart longer than eight years."

"Did you ever hear from her?"

"No, sir; I told both of 'em *to their faces* that they needn't come back."

"Very well, that eliminates Miranda—seven years' absence raises a presumption of death. We can begin afresh. Who next?"

"Wait a minute, Major, an' don't stampede me. Give me time to ponder. That high-stepping Artemise, she come next; she's the one that hankered after hangin' up those divo'cement papers."

"She got a legal divorce?"

"Yes, sir, all wool and a yard wide. I paid the lawyer twenty-five dollars; an' paid out nine dollars and sixty cents court cost. That brought me in the clear."

"All right; we are safe enough as far as Miranda. Next."

"Next come Ella."

"How did you lose Ella?"

"She jes took a walk; that woman must be walkin' yet from the way she started."

"Ella never wrote back?"

"No, sir, Ella never *looked* back. I got right provoked with the way Ella behaved."

"How long ago has that been?"

"Not quite three years."

"Now then, we are getting down to modern times. Next came Sally Mag?"

"Yes, sir, April 22nd, 1910."

"You never got a divorce from Sally Mag?"

"No, sir. I wish you'd see that nappy-headed woman an' tell me whether you'd waste twenty-five *cents* on her, let alone twenty-five *dollars*, and court costs."

"And your medley of matrimony culminated with a happy marriage to Hurlda."

"I don't rightly understand all that, Major; but Hurlda's a mighty good cotton picker; I'll say that much for Hurlda."

Captain Porter leaned forward wearily, resting his head in his hands, until Plez came to the very end. "Well, Major, how are we going to get Plez out of this tangle?"

The lawyer ran over his memoranda of marriage dates, divorces and desertions. "I can't seem to think; I've got such a headache. Maybe it figures out somewhat like this: His marriage to Miranda was legal, his first wife being dead. Miranda deserted in the fall of 1901; by 1908 Plez had a right to presume that she was dead, and marry again; but he didn't wait until then. Therefore, his marriage to Artemise, *within the seven years*, was probably illegal unless Miranda were dead as a matter of fact. Then Artemise got a divorce. We can scratch Artemise. His marriage to Ella was likewise void—unless Miranda were dead, in which event it was valid. Ella has only been absent for three years, and no presumption arises as to her. If his marriage to Ella were legal—Miranda being *actually* dead—then his marriage to Sally Mag is void. Meanwhile—we may be able to make something out of this point—meanwhile, Miranda's seven years has expired, and so far as *Hurlda* is concerned, his latest marriage may be valid. As to Hurlda, even Ella will be pre-

sumed dead, although the seven years have not expired. You see this is a criminal case, and our client is presumed innocent. That presumption conflicts with the presumption of Ella's continued life; but the presumption of innocence is stronger, and will overthrow the other."

Old Plez smiled amiably; Sunlover leaned over on the table and listened to the lawyer with his mouth wide open.

"Of course, this does not take into account the legal complications which may arise from these various marriages with Sally Mag, as affecting her capacity to contract additional matrimony. Some courts hold that the crime of bigamy is completed by going through a form of marriage, whether valid or not, when the party already has a lawful husband or wife. Do you follow me?"

Captain Porter stared blankly. "No, you lost me long before we got to Ella."

"Well"—the Major gathered his papers—"Henshaw won't know what the law is any better than I do. We'll thrash it out after dinner."—Plez looked mighty happy.—"On cross-examination I'll make Sally Mag tell about her various husbands. She'll get scared and lie a-plenty. Some of the jurors may be glad of an excuse not to convict. It's a slim chance, but we've got to take it."

"Sally Mag aint goin' to tell *nothin'*," Sunlover Sam volunteered; "Sally Mag aint gwine to be in dis here cote-house."

Briscoe dropped his papers. "Why didn't you tell that before, in place of worrying me into a headache?"

"I 'lowed you gentlemuns knowed how nigger wimmens is. Dey aint goin' to come nigh enough to put *deir* foot in no hole. By now I 'spect she's most to dat levee camp in Arkansas."

Briscoe and Porter looked at each other, almost afraid to hope. Old Plez shifted uneasily, and said: "I sholy hates

dat. We can't have no sort of a law suit if Sally Mag aint here. I was itchin' to hear the Major orate against that woman."

Upon the stroke of the clock, Judge Barton mounted his bench and rapped for order: "State of Mississippi vs. Pleasant Crawford; Bigamy. What says the District Attorney?"

Porter and Briscoe were already seated at the table with Plez Crawford. Mr. Henshaw arose. "I believe the State is ready, your Honor: Mr. Sheriff, call the witness."

"Sally Mag Jenkins!"

No answer.

"The witness must have stepped outside for a moment; she's been waiting here for a week. Will the Sheriff please call her at the door?"

"Sally Mag Jenkins! Sally Mag Jenkins!" His call resounded over the quiet square.

Henshaw looked puzzled. A man stood up amongst the spectators: Mr. Gersty, the new owner of Willow Point.



"I paid the lawyer twenty-five dollars for that divorce."

"Mrs. Jenkins has gone," he said; "as a public-spirited citizen, I tried to keep her here for this case. She crossed the river in a skiff about an hour ago."

"Is she coming back?" inquired Henshaw.

"No, sir; I could see that she took her trunk and a skiff-load of furniture." Mr. Gersty sat down with a thump. Sunlover Sam hung over the rail, looking on stolidly. Old Plez seemed mightily put out.

Henshaw paused. "If your Honor please, we may as well dispose of this case. The State has but one witness, and she has fled beyond the jurisdiction of this court."

"You wish to enter a nol. pros.? Very well." The Judge wrote down something in his big book. "We will proceed with the next case."

Captain Porter touched Plez on the shoulder. "You can go home now and build that fence."

"Is it all over with, Cap'n? This kind o' law suit 'pears like a mighty lot o' foolishness."

Plez Crawford had entered that courtroom as an important personage; he slipped out dejectedly without answering any of the questions that came from the string of friends who followed him. His son was waiting in the wagon. "Drive 'long, Willy Boy." Plez climbed aboard his saddle mule, and Sunlover

Sam caught his bridle. "Hole up, Uncle Plez; aint you gwine to have no law suit?"

"No, Judge throwed it out o' court. Twarn't nothin' but a passel o' nigger news. Hurry up, son—we got to git our wire an' git home an' build that fence this evenin'."

That night all the Evangeline tenants gathered at the stove, talking over the lawsuit that Uncle Plez Crawford had—which warn't no lawsuit at all.

Once, when Sunlover Sam stepped outside, his ex-wife caught him by the sleeve. "Sam," she said, "you better say nothin', an' I better say nothin'. We done got well fixed over here."

"Dat's de troof, Liza; dese white folks had me skeered up—'taint no tellin' what foolishness dey gwine to start next."

"Huh!" sniffed Liza; "white folks aint meanin' no harm—but dey sho' takes up wid some mighty curyus notions."

Sam studied over the satisfactory situation. "Us couldn't found no better way to move; you got a good home an' I got a good home. I aint aimin' to move no mo'."

"Me neither; den you jes' humor de white folks when they tries to mix up in nigger news."

Sam laughed aloud. "Dat sho'ly is de bestes' way," he said.





The GIRL Who Had EVERYTHING

By W. Carey Wonderly

Author of "The Tin-Pan Girlie," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY COYLE CHRISTY TINCHER

BETTY locked her own door behind her, slipped the key under the mat, and then tripped blithely down the corridor, a snatch of song on her lips, to the studio of Miss Martha Bourne.

"Oh, dearie!" she caroled, striking sharply with her knuckles on the panel.

There followed a long, dull pause. "Hoo-hoo!" Betty shrilled again, this time pounding with both fists upon the door. "Oh, you Martie—!"

Footsteps on a bare floor she heard then, and in a twinkling Martha herself stood just across the threshold, silent, her eyes alone framing her question.

"I just wanted to see if you were home yet," declared Betty, squeezing past her into the room. "You are, aren't you? But in the dark! Why don't you be human and light up, kiddie?"

Martha closed the door with a little bang and now stood leaning against it, her face marred by a bitter, half contemptuous smile.

"Surely you didn't come all this way to ask me *that*?" she scoffed.

Betty made a gesture with her hands and the tip of her little red tongue appeared for the briefest second.

"Hoity-toity!" she cried. "Some of these fine days I am going to paint you with that very expression and call the canvas 'Helen of Troy—N. Y.' or something like that. . . . Why will you sit in the dark?"

"Because I wish to," rebuked Martha. "For goodness' sake run along to the theatre and let me be—in peace."

Betty clicked her way to the door in her ridiculously high-heel slippers; there she stopped, and suddenly raised her hand and turned the electric switch. Quicker than a flash her bright little eyes had swept the studio, resting at last on Martha Bourne's face.

"So that was why you wished to sit in the dark," she said.

"I don't know what you're talking about, Betty!" flashed Martha.

"Yes, you do. . . . Where's the piano, kiddie?"

Martha sat down suddenly on the rug-covered couch.

"If you wouldn't come spying on people—" she began, with a queer little note in her voice. "All I want is to be let alone—"

"And *that's* what we are not going to do!" snapped Betty brusquely. "Some folks just naturally have to be watched. How do you expect to study without your piano?"

Martha was silent and Betty repeated her question.

"I don't know," replied Miss Bourne then. "It was only rented—of course. But I was behind two payments, so when the man came yesterday, I told him he'd better send for it—and he did, this afternoon. I'm about ready to give up."

"Lord love us!" said Betty, with a little squeal. "Give up, indeed! Well, if that's the way you're going to talk, you ought to be made to pack your trunk and take the very next train back to Slumberland—or whatever it is you call that Southern village you hail from. I'm disgusted with you, Marta. A girl with as much favor in her as you've got! Voice, looks, youth! What do you want? To be singing first soprano rôles at the Metropolitan, at twenty, and after twelve months' study without ever having set foot in Europe?"

"Oh, the way you put it—" flared up Martha. "It's all very well to remind me that I'm twenty, and have a voice and some looks. But I've got—other things too, Betty, and I tell you I'm sick and tired—and penniless."

Betty sat down heavily. She had guessed as much.

"What you want to do is to get something to do!" she declared, after a silence.

Martha smiled half-heartedly at the triumphant note in her chum's voice. Betty was such an optimist—where others were concerned.

"Now look at me," she announced. "Do you think for a minute that the fair Bettina is—is—yes, suping, thank you dearie!—Well, then, do you think for a minute, that she is suping at the Academy for a dollar a night because she cherishes secret ambitions to shine histrionically? Not on your three score years and ten. There's no 'starring' bee in Miss Betty's chapeau. It's the six iron

men in her pay envelope each Saturday afternoon. Bettina, noble maiden, suffers for her art. But she suffers to a purpose. Thespi supports her in her 'prentice days. However, a time will come when the Salon will hang her canvas in the favorite spot and people stopping in front of it, will ask, 'Who is this wonderful Bettina Hurlbutt?' And that day my natal town will change the name of its principal thoroughfare to mine. Doth thou like the picture, little one?"

Martha thumped the cushions into a comfortable mass and leaned back luxuriously. And as Betty finished, with a flourish of her hand, she even laughed a little.

"Converted!" she cried. "Are they willing to pay another 'noble maiden,' 'six iron men' for 'suffering for her art' down at the Academy?"

"They are not!" snapped Betty. "But if you get out and hustle, you'll pretty soon find somebody else that is. Martha, it's a fact: there're not five students out of every ten studying in New York who do not work at something for expenses. Even Lucile Charles does."

Instantly Martha's face clouded; she sat up on the couch, her chin on her palm.

"They say at the Art School that Lucile's father is wealthy," she remarked.

"He is—the Crœsus of his home town. What's that got to do with his daughter's supporting herself?"

"Just this. She is always winning prizes and complimentaries, things which she can afford to pay for but the poorer girls—like myself—cannot!" Martha's cheeks were crimson with indignation. "And now she has entered for the Cavallini scholarship. If she wins that, it means three years in Paris. Lucile Charles can go to Europe to-morrow if she wishes it, but we cannot—unless we win the Cavallini. Don't you see the injustice, Betty? I've *got* to get to Paris if I mean to make anything of my voice. And it would be just like Fate to hand the prize to her. I tell you, it isn't fair. She has *everything*!"

Betty broke in brusquely:

"Everything she has, she pays for herself. Really, kiddie, her folks don't send her a penny more than yours do—or

mine; and I haven't any, poor little Topsy. No, Lucile goes out and hustles."

"She doesn't have to," sulked Martha.

"Yet she does. I heard it said at the Art Club that she declared she would pay for her own musical education—every penny. So she has to go in for scholarships."

Martha got up and crossed to the window. It looked out on a court and was directly opposite to a window in Lucile Charles' studio.

"If I had a rich father—"

"Rubbish! You ought to be ashamed of yourself," snapped Betty, moving toward the door. "The next thing you know you'll ruin your voice, whining so much. And now I *must* go. They'll be holding the curtain for me as it is, I know. *Au 'voir*. Sleep on your auntie's words for a change."

After the door had closed behind Betty, Martha went over to the window and dropped down on the pleasant, cushioned seat. Across the court, in Miss Charles' studio, a light was burning, and not only were the curtains drawn aside, but the sash was raised, top and bottom. And Martha could plainly see Lucile seated at the piano.

Martha was sure of the music her neighbor was practicing, but still she opened her own window and listened breathlessly. Yes, it was Puccini—"Madam Butterfly!" Martha lowered the sash with a bang. Lucile Charles even chose her favorite rôle, *Butterfly* being one of the few parts for which Martha was suited physically. It was outrageous! The girl had everything! And what she didn't have, she took!

Martha must have watched her for an hour through the pane. Then, Lucile rose and disappeared behind a portière. When she returned to the piano, a few minutes later, she was dressed for the street. Martha hesitated only a second; then she got into her own hat and coat and hurried out in the corridor.

The two girls met at the elevator, Martha petite and brunette, Lucile a tall, splendid blonde.

"Hello," said Miss Charles, in her frank, almost boyish way.

"Hello," returned Martha. "Going to the Club?"

"No," Lucile confessed, with a little laugh, "I'm going to see the manager at the Yale Cabaret—about a job. You know, I've been singing at Santley's, but—well, I didn't know my business and somebody else got my place. I hope to land this new café though."

"What was the matter at Santley's?" asked Martha quickly.

"Myself!" flashed Lucile. "I sang rag-time, because I thought the people who frequent such places demand it. And I can't sing rag-time as the professionals can. Then a girl whose voice isn't one, two, three alongside of mine, Martha, stepped into the bill one night and sang 'Lucia' and 'Trovatore' and 'Bohème'—and the house went mad! On Saturday they let me go and put her into the regular bill."

"But didn't you tell them?"

"No. Only it sha'n't occur again.... Going down!"

All the way down in the elevator Martha was silent, and when they stepped out and walked through the storm doors to the street, she decided suddenly on another direction when Miss Charles asked her if she was going her way. And, as Lucile started off in the darkness toward Broadway, she walked west, heading for Seventh Avenue.

Somehow she made her way into Santley's and somehow she made her way out again. The booking for the restaurant was made through an agent; nobody was signed direct with the place. The rebuff seemed to take all the spirit out of Martha. Suddenly she became conscious of the fact that she was alone on the street at ten o'clock and that men were staring at her. Putting aside the idea of a cab—which came to her first!—she started back on foot to the studio building. Then, half way home, she remembered the other cabaret, in the Times Square district, which Lucile had said was a new place. Perhaps they would take her on there.

Possibly because the Yale was new and the management on the look-out for novelties, Martha got to see "the proprietor." He listened listlessly while she spoke of her voice, being careful to mention that she could sing "Lucia" and "Trovatore" and "Bohème," and when

she had finished he simply bowed her over by asking her if she could dance. Martha couldn't—at least she didn't know the syncopated dances, which were what he meant. But Martha was pretty and youthful and demure—a "type"—and the man decided to give her a chance—in spite of her grand opera voice. She was to come Saturday night at ten o'clock with three songs and an evening frock.

Betty was at breakfast when Martha came rushing in, the next day. One glance at her face told Betty that something quite out of the ordinary had happened and so she promptly dropped everything and gave undivided attention.

"Have you won the scholarship—or what?" she demanded.

"Oh, Bet, you'd never guess! I'm to sing at the Yale!" cried Martha.

"Good gracious! You're to do—*what!*"

"To sing in the cabaret show at the Yale. I went last night and it's all arranged. Isn't that glorious news?"

"I don't know whether it is or not yet," said Betty slowly. "Who took you there? And where is the Yale?"

"It's somewhere up near Times Square and Lucile Charles took me there—or sent me. I met her and she said she was going there to see about some work. So I went too."

"With—Charles?"

"No, alone."

"I was going to say— Was she engaged with you?"

Martha shook her head.

"I don't know. I'm to sing three songs



"Oh, Bet, you'd never guess! I'm to sing at the Yale!"

—in an evening frock. Oh, Bet, what shall I wear?"

"Never mind that now. Anyway, have you much choice? Come, we'll run over and see Lucile."

Although it was very early, Miss Charles had finished her breakfast and was at her piano, the score of "Butterfly" on the rack before her. Betty knocked, then entered without waiting—the music proved that their hostess was visible, she declared.

"Charlie," she said, without any beating around the bush, "what do you know about the Yale Cabaret?"

"Nothing," returned Lucile, with a little gesture of her hands. "I'm going into the bill there Saturday. Why?"

"Oh! . . . I'm glad!" muttered Martha softly.

"Why?" asked Lucile again.

"Because," explained Betty, "Martha is going to sing there."

Lucile gave her a quick, comprehensive look, then smiled good naturedly and held her hand for a second in her own.

"So you're the new singer! . . . I'm to dance," she said.

"You're going to do—what?" cried Bettina. "Lord bless me, Charlie, what kind of a dance?"

Lucile beat her palms together softly.

"That's all right," she told them. "I went to the Vale last night, but it seems they didn't want a soloist but a dancer. They asked me if I could dance. Kiddies, I can fly—if they want an aviator. I make my *début* as the only real rival or St. Denis this Saturday night. You'd better be on hand."

"Maybe I won't—if you're on after eleven," muttered Betty. She turned to Martha with a smile. "We'll have to hand it to Charlie," she declared. "You've got my best wishes."

"And mine!" echoed Martha.

"As if I didn't know that," beamed Lucile, following them to the door.

Betty was glad that Martha had found a way of adding to her meager income. But she had an idea—which she never let out of her bosom—that Martha Bourne wasn't any too strong. Often she'd look at her and wonder how, in the years to come, Martha was going to stand the strain of grand opera. She had such a frail body, such a flat chest; and yet the voice was there.

"Of course she's really not any younger than the rest of us," she told Lucile Charles, "but somehow I always think of Martha Bourne as the merest infant. I wish you'd give an eye to her over at that Vale place—will you, my dear?"

Naturally, their engagement at the same cabaret show threw the two girls much together; and it gave Martha a chance, too, to see the earnestness, the very whole-heartedness with which Lucile Charles entered into each new scheme.

Another girl, Miss Bourne declared afterwards to Betty, would have gone out and bought a dancing costume—especially if she could have had the moon simply by writing home for it. But this was not Lucile's way. She set out to make

her dress out of a lace window curtain and an Oriental couch cover, and she worked on it until the wee, sma' hours more than one night too.

"That," said Martha, with a sigh, "is why she has everything in the world, I suppose."

"Yes," nodded wise Betty, "but you see they are only the things which she works for, after all, my dear."

It was a red-letter night for the studio when two of its protégés went into the bill at the Vale. Half of the School and the Club crowded into the place and sat at the choicest tables, drinking horse's necks, and vichy and milk, while waiting for the appearance of their friends. This was not exactly the sort of patronage the café wished to attract, and the manager was restless.

"What is it, a Sunday-school Montmartre?" he demanded.

Lucile appeared first. She looked stunning and the costume was nothing short of wonderful when you considered, as did her friends, its humble beginning. But her dancing, a few simple, modest little steps, brought her no applause in that ultra Broadway gathering. Of course the School and the Club clapped their hands sore, but this deceived nobody, least of all Lucile and the manager.

"Oh, it was terrible, terrible!" cried Martha, coming to meet Lucile as she danced her way back to the dressing room.

"Yes, it was pretty bad," acknowledged Miss Charles, with a nod and a tightening of her mouth. "Something'll have to be done if I want to stay—and I do!"

"I didn't mean—that," cried Martha hastily.

"Well, it's the truth," Lucile insisted frankly.

When Martha appeared upon the miniature stage her art chums had become too discouraged after Lucile's failure to applaud, and she faced the huge room of people in silence. Then the orchestra began the "Jewel Song" and Martha found herself singing *Marguerite's* familiar music in a clear, sweet, but rather weak, soprano. Perhaps she showed stage fright, for the good na-

tured folk applauded her encouragingly at the end. So she took heart and began the "Flute Number" from "Lucia" in a stronger, surer voice. But now, seeing she had overcome her timidity, the merry-makers lost interest in her; they hadn't come to hear grand opera; from the looks of the girl she was there for the night. If Martha had stopped then, all would have been well, but unwisely she took an encore which rightfully wasn't hers. During her last song the audience laughed and talked until her voice wasn't audible three feet from the stage, and she took her departure in silence.

Betty was waiting for her in the dressing-room, for it was after eleven o'clock and the theatre was out. Lucile was there too, and a man whom Martha didn't know.

"Never mind," whispered Betty.

"They were positively rude!" said Martha, choking back a sob.

"Mutts!" emphasized the young man.

Then Lucile came over, and introductions followed. The man was from her home town; his name was Kenneth Holt and he was younger even than Martha had thought at first glance. Martha remembered dimly Miss Charles' speaking of Holt. Early in the year he used to take her out to dinner frequently; of late Martha almost had forgotten him since Lucile had ceased mentioning him and his parties.

"Ken wants to take you and Bettina home," Miss Charles said later to Martha. "Yes, why not? He's a nice boy and it's really too late for you to be out by yourself. Shall I say yes to him?"

"But—you?" cried Martha.

"They're going to let me dance again—I've told them I know another one and they're going to take a chance. What about Kenneth?"

"If you don't care—" commenced Martha, but Betty cut her short.

"Why should I? He'll get a taxi, and cabs aren't to be sneezed at in the mystic circle of the Three A's! You'll like Ken Holt."

When Martha was ready, she and Betty hurried out the side door to find Kenneth Holt and a taxicab at their service. And Betty insisted on sitting in the little front seat, where she

promptly fell asleep, leaving Holt and Martha to carry on such conversation as they felt inclined. Martha was very blue about her failure at the cabaret.

"It'll be hard getting another try-out too, with that awful record at the Yale staring me in the face," she told him.

"I think you sang beautifully," he insisted stoutly. "But it was like casting pearls before swine to waste your voice on that crowd with its rag-time appetite. Some fat, overdressed woman snapping her fingers and rolling her eyes is about their size."

"Then I wish I were she!" laughed Martha.

"Oh, never!" he ejaculated. Then, more calmly: "Why?"

"Because the money they would pay me for entertaining in such a place would almost meet my expenses at the School," said Martha frankly. "I'm a small-town girl and the folks back home haven't got the moon to give to me when I hold out my hands toward it—no, not even if I cry."

There was an awkward little silence.

"Have you never thought of trying your luck in some church choir?" he asked finally. "Or—don't they pay?"

Martha laughed a little bitterly.

"Oh, they pay all right—the big ones do. And of course I—girls like us—would rather go there to sing than in the cabarets. But even a girl with a voice—such as Lucile has—finds it more difficult to get a hearing in a New York choir than—well, a camel has a better chance of passing through the eye of a needle!" she ended with a laugh. "You—outsiders, home folk—haven't an idea what it is. Talk about your unions!"

"That's rotten!" muttered Holt.

The cab stopped at the door of their studio building and it was necessary to waken Betty and then threaten her with the police before she could be coaxed from the vehicle.

"Of course I've seen taxies before," she protested, "but I didn't know they were made to ride in—cross my heart."

"I've got my touring car here in New York with me," said Holt. "If I had had time—"

"Now I know I'm asleep," interposed Bettina. "Martha, pinch me!"

She ran on ahead, leaving Martha and Holt together in the shadow of the doorway. From the street blinked the lamps on the waiting cab.

Martha held out her hand; Holt took it in his.

"If I bring my car around to-morrow will you go for a spin with me?" he asked. "It's the greatest little model!"

"And Betty—?"

"Why, of course!" he said, after the briefest hesitancy.

"She'll love it!" cried Martha. "She's been awfully good to me—and Lucile

fear of the literary pair across the hall and their champion, the janitor, sent her off to bed at once. But she was awakened, almost before she was asleep, she declared, by some one knocking on her door; and jumping out of bed, in the sunshine of a new day, she found Betty out in the corridor, dressed.

"Are you going to sleep all morning?" cried Bet. "Step aside and let me come in. Isn't he gloriously fine?"

"You mean—Kenneth Holt?" asked Martha.

"No-o, the manager at the cabaret! Did he make a date with you, Martha?"

"Don't be vulgar.... I suppose you mean Mr. Holt?"

"No, I mean Kenneth!" announced Betty calmly.

Martha drew her kimono across her shoulders and sat down on the side of the bed.

"Is he going to marry Lucile?" she asked.

"I rather think not," said Bettina, suddenly serious. "He knew her back in Ohio, where their folks are rich—Ken in his own right. But Charlie has this grand opera bee in her bonnet; she wants a career, not a home. I've heard her say. And Holt don't come to see her any more—as he used, I mean, when they both first came to New York. Last night he had dropped into the Yale with some friends, saw her, and

came back. I don't think she was pleased to death to see him, do you?"

"I don't know.... Bet, he is coming at noon to take us out in his car."

"Us?"

"Yes, you and Lucile and me."

"I never liked crowds," said Betty. "When Lord Ken wants me to try his new car it will have to be *à deux*. No 'come-all-ye's' for me."

Martha seemed to hesitate.

"I thought if he and Lucile—I had heard—things, you know, Bet.... You will go?"

"Not I! Besides, I'm off to Westchester—you know that."



"That," said Martha with a sigh, "is why she has everything in the world, I suppose."

too! You're going to ask Lucile, aren't you, Mr. Holt?"

"Oh, I don't mind asking her," he explained. "But just what good it will do—"

Martha sighed.

"Very well. I'll tell Betty. When will you come?"

"Early."

"Not too early—!"

"To-morrow's Sunday. No school to-morrow—surely. I'll be round at noon," he said.

When Martha got upstairs she found that Bettina had gone straight to her room, and while she wanted to talk, her

"I forgot.... I'll run ask Lucile. Don't you think it would have been better if he had done it himself, though? She might think—I'm half sorry I said I'd go. I wonder if I'd telephone to him and get him to telephone to her—"

"Stuff and nonsense!" cried Bettina. "Run in and tell her he is coming at noon. She can't eat you. And as I heard the tale, she threw him down. Come along."

Lucile Charles was sitting in the bay window sewing on a lace and purple dancing skirt when her neighbors came knocking at her door. At her cheery "*Entrez!*" Martha and Betty entered the room, Betty stopping half-way, and hiding her face with her hands as she saw their hostess' occupation. But Lucile only smiled and went on with her work.

"I'm shortening it," she explained.

"It's your dancing costume?" asked Martha.

Lucile nodded.

"I'm engaged at the Vale—indefinitely," she told them, with modest pride. "After you left, I went on again—only this time I let down my hair and took off my shoes and stockings—"

"Lucile Charles!" ejaculated Martha.

"Well, my dear, I had to. Twenty-five dollars a week is quite an item, and my expenses are getting heavier all the time."

"I know, but—"

"Do you ever expect to sing *Thaïs* or *Tosca*?" Lucile asked her bluntly.

"But that's opera!" protested Martha.

"Children," said Bettina then, her eyes shining. "I'd go and stand on my head in Times Square for money to pay my art course!"

"The end justifies the way, you mean," ventured Martha.

"Exactly," smiled Lucile. "I had to do it to make good—don't think too horribly of me, please."

"Oh! As if we could!" flashed Betty.

For a brief period Lucile stitched away on her dancing skirt in silence while the other two girls stood watching her with fascinated eyes. It was like Lucile to get the engagement in spite of all obstacles, thought Bettina; Martha believed it would have been easier to have written home for funds than to

appear on a stage in one's bare feet.

"Yet Isadora Duncan does!" said Lucile, looking up suddenly, with a smile.

Martha's face turned crimson, the color mounting to her brow.

"How did you know?" she murmured.

"My dear, it's perfectly all right," Miss Charles nodded. "And now let's talk of something else."

Betty gave Martha a significant glance and Martha said:

"Mr. Holt has invited us out in his new car to-day. It's ideal weather for a spin—and, as usual, Bet has another date. Something tiresome at Westchester."

"Is that so?" grinned Lucile. "Something tiresome at Westchester." Betty's sure one martyr—to her canvases, of course.... But, Marta, I can't be spinning around country roads in Ken Holt's new car to-day—that's a dead certainty. I don't expect to stir out of this room all day, what with my music and this 'creation' I'm fixing up. But of course you don't care."

"Don't care for—what?" asked Martha.

"Two's company," smiled Lucile.

"Oh, that!" Martha Bourne shrugged her shoulders and moved toward the door. "Of course that breaks up the party. I'll just 'phone Mr. Holt not to come."

Lucile jumped up and followed her to the door, slipping an arm around her slim waist.

"You'll do nothing of the sort," she declared. "The idea! Simply because Bet's got a date and I've got my work to do, you're going to turn down Ken in this manner! And it isn't fair. No doubt the poor boy is dying of *ennui*—in a strange town like this. And I know he's as proud as a kid with a toy over this new car of his. Marta, you're mean as mean."

"Oh, if that's the way you feel—" frowned Martha.

"It is."

Miss Bourne glanced at the clock.

"I haven't a decent thing to wear," she announced. "And my gloves need cleaning—"

The door closed gently behind her.

"Can you see her as *Tosca*?" ques-



Seeing she had lost her timidity, the merry-makers lost interest in her.

tioned Lucile, with a little helpless gesture.

Bettina shook her head. And in her mind, just then, was a picture of Martha Bourne in a far more attractive rôle. She followed her out of the studio in silence.

When Kenneth Holt arrived at noon, Martha was dressed to the entire satisfaction of herself and Betty. That her costume was made up of odds and ends from different studios mattered little; students are notoriously generous: gloves and ribbons and stockings and veil and muff had been eagerly pressed upon her until Martha shrank under her embarrassment of riches.

"Say, you're looking bully, you know," cried Holt, when she came to greet him.

"Thank you—we all do! I'll tell the girls," smiled she demurely.

He didn't remember to ask for Betty and Lucile, and when Martha told him that previous engagements had prevented

them from accepting his invitation, he merely gazed at her blankly. So Martha said nothing more.

It was a wonderful day. They lunched at Claremont, then went far into the country, coming back, past Grant's tomb, at sunset. After which he suggested dinner at a well-known hotel which, heretofore, Martha had stared at in worshipful silence.

"How was it?" asked Betty, creeping in her room that night.

"Oh, Bet!" murmured Martha sleepily. "You have no idea! We went to the Magnifique for dinner."

Betty was duly impressed.

"Madame Cecilli sings there on Sunday night," she cried. "Of course you were enchanted."

"Cecilli?... I didn't hear her," murmured Miss Bourne. "That must have been while Ken was telling that funny story about his being shipwrecked last summer."

Two weeks came and went. Bettina painted hard all day, suped at night for a dollar a performance, and went out to Westchester each Sunday. Lucile was dancing her way to fame at the Yale, where her name now—"Lucilla"—was announced at the head of the bill; and Holt kept Martha occupied selecting some gifts for him to send home to his people. Martha liked to spend, to go from shop to shop in a smart limousine, and not have to ask the price before choosing it.

"Maybe the Mater wont be tickled with this—and this—and this," cried Holt. "You've got the most wonderful taste!"

Martha glowed like one of Betty's sunsets; she was beautiful in those happy December days.

Then Lucile caught a cold—from too much barefoot dancing, the studio declared. This meant that she was forced to give up most of her vocal work, yet she clung to the Yale, even when she was far from well enough to go through her part of the entertainment. The weather was stormy too, just then, and Betty went to Kenneth Holt and put the case clearly before him.

"Charlie can't afford to walk to and from the cabaret in this snow and wind," she said. "And street cars are just as bad. It's up to you, Hottie, to offer your machine, now isn't it?"

"It is," said Ken, and he did.

Of course Martha didn't understand. She only knew that Holt was with Lucile every night now; and Betty, for some reason best known only to herself, didn't take it upon herself to explain—when she could, since it was all her doing.

After the fat days, Martha found the lean ones doubly dull, and she moped in Betty's room a great deal, talking when Betty wished to paint, and refusing to go out with any of the other girls to matinees or holiday jaunts. She almost forced Betty into confessing the whole situation one day, but Betty finally determined to hold her peace and let things run their course.

"You see, I was right," said Martha, that same afternoon; "Lucile is a girl who has everything."

"Oh, well—" Bettina was mixing colors and didn't wish to be disturbed.

"Well enough!" cried Martha then, jumping up and speaking in a tone Bet had never remembered hearing her use before. "She sha'n't have everything, though. I'll get that Cavalini Scholarship or—or die! I'll go to Europe! Lucile Charles sha'n't have that too!"

"Why, Martha!"

Martha shook herself angrily like a wet dog.

"My *Butterfly* is miles ahead of hers these days," she announced. "She'll ruin her voice, bothering with that horrid cabaret. I'm glad I failed there. For twenty-five dollars—"

"Forty, now!" snapped Betty.

"Well—"

Betty saw the wisdom of Martha's shrewdness, but she didn't know just what to do. It was entirely out of the question to go to Lucile, and she didn't want Kenneth Holt ever to know that there were any flaws in his idol. And letting matters run their course would surely result in Martha winning the Scholarship—which Charlie needed most!

Then, one day later, Martha came into Betty's studio dressed for the street and with a letter in her hand. There was a certain little grimness about her mouth which Betty didn't like, and her eyes were bright and dry.

"I'm going home," she announced, in a flat, colorless voice.

"Oh, Martha! . . . Is it bad news?"

"No. This letter—I wrote myself—to the folks, saying I am coming. I want to go home, Bet."

But this was not what Bettina desired at all. She tried strategy.

"But the Scholarship?"

"Lucile may have it. . . . She will—if I drop out, you know."

Betty nodded.

"Oh, I'm sick and tired, Bet!" cried Martha then, throwing herself face down on the couch. "I haven't the heart to try for the Scholarship any longer—I don't care! I know I'm wicked to act this way after all Dad has done—and nobody'll ever know what the home folks did do, Bet, to send me here to New York. I was to repay them when I be-

came a famous prima donna. Bet, I'll never sing again."

"Nonsense. You ought to be spanked."

"It's the truth. For the first time since I can remember I've lost interest in my voice and in my future."

The telephone bell rang out sharply and Betty went to answer it. When she was at leisure again, Martha was gone.

The dull December afternoon ebbed and died. Lucile and Holt came in at five o'clock and Betty invited them to remain for tea. And it was while Lucile toasted the muffins that Bet ran over to Martha's room to bring her back for the feast.

Five minutes later she returned, silent and grave.

"Where's Martha?" asked Holt, turning on the piano-bench—he had been thumping out ragtime.

"She's gone home," said Betty soberly.

He was at her side in a second, his own eyes as horrified as hers.

"Home?"

"Yes. Her studio was locked and when I asked the janitor—"

"Where is the janitor?" asked Holt.

"Down in the basement."

"And Martha's home?"

Betty gave him the address.

"I'll just run down and see that fellow," he said then, and hurried off without a backward glance.

The two girls sat there in the darkness together for nearly an hour. And neither of them spoke a word. Then Betty rose

briskly and turned the electric switch.

"Of course the tea's ruined, waiting for that Ken—!"

"Will you call the janitor and ask him where Ken is?" asked Lucile.

"Why, yes! . . . Hello, Perkins. Have you seen Mr. Holt, please? . . . Thank you. . . . Perkins says he took a cab—told the man to drive to Grand Central in time to catch the five-something, Charlie."

Lucile got up and went over to the window, parting the curtains and standing looking down in the street. Presently Bettina joined her, touching her caressingly on the shoulder.

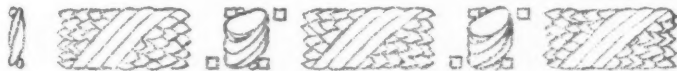
"You will win the Cavalini Scholarship, you know," she said.

"As if I cared for that!" breathed Lucile. "I was willing for her to have something—"

"That's just it," Betty declared then; "she should have something. You knew, Charlie, that Martha would never have been a great singer—and you have a future! She would have won merely because you were ill, but she couldn't have kept up at that mark to save her life. While you— Don't you see? Everyone must have something."

Lucile walked to the door and turned, her hand on the brass knob.

"Yes, I understand. . . . And I know that I have a voice, a future. Really and truly, I believe some day I shall stand at the top of the ladder; but, Betty, she— Martha—that girl has *everything*!"



The Previous Chapters of The New Chester Novel

BIG is what George Randolph Chester calls this new novel. It deals with "big" men and "big" situations and with what is more unusual in fiction, a girl as "big" as they, who is a refreshing change from the siren, the plotter, and the vampire.

Gail Sargent is a brown-eyed glory of a girl from a small inland city, who walks into the story and a vestry meeting of the wealthy Market Square Church, New York, where her Uncle Jim Sargent and seven other millionaire vestrymen are haggling over a fifty-million-dollar deal with Edward E. Allison, who has built up the gigantic traction lines of the city. The church wants fifty millions for its Vedder Court tenement property, which Allison is anxious to buy for less for traction terminals.

"How do you like our famous old church?" says the Rev. Smith Boyd, the handsome young rector.

"It seems to be a remarkably lucrative enterprise," smiles Gail. Allison sees and his eyes twinkle. He presses Gail to let him drive her home.

Allison indulges in the weakness of bragging—tells her he has worked his way to the summit of a splendid achievement and has decided to rest.

"Why?" asks the girl. Of a sudden he feels like a pricked bubble. Why indeed should a man of his ability stop? And he decides to achieve something that will command her respect.

He draws across a map of the United States, lines indicating railroads which, connected, would make the most direct route from New York to San Francisco—then proceeds to buy those roads. He calls in old Tim Corman, political boss, and arranges for condemnation of the Vedder Court tenements, and the building under the river of an eight-track tube, ostensibly for a municipal subway.

Because this subway is the only crack through which a railroad could get into the heart of New York City, Allison's plan is to have his railroad and street transportation depot all in one big building in Vedder Court, so travelers may step off a train onto an "L." or into a subway.

Allison calls on Gail after a flying trip West. Howard Clemmens, a home-city suitor, is with her. Rev.

Smith Boyd has been there, but has departed after seeing Clemmens, in greeting Gail, kiss her. Clemmens, jealous of Gail's surroundings, begs her to marry at once. She refuses, for she suddenly realizes her interests are only in powerful men.

Allison calls a meeting of the seven men whose combined trusts control all the food, coal, iron and building commodities of America. He shows them his railroad, and proposes that they form one world-powerful trust.

"Who is to be monarch of your new empire?" asks one.

"The best man," answers Allison, and the seven realize that there are now eight great men in the country.

Dalrymple, who owns outright the controlling interest in a North-and-South running road, is asked to sell. He refuses. So these business giants coolly declare there will have to be a panic anyway; they'll crush Dalrymple and get his road then.

As his subway is nearing completion, Allison takes Gail and a party of friends, including the Rev. Smith Boyd, who shows signs of falling in love with her, on a trial run in a private car. There is an explosion and a cave-in, and in the end Allison and Boyd, digging together, save the party. This brings Gail into sensational newspaper prominence. One Sunday journal prints a full-page story showing a picture of her with the nine most eligible men in New York offering her their hearts and fortunes. Gail, in chagrin, returns to her old home.

Gail's home friends welcome her with every attention. Letters from New York urge her to come back but she refuses. Dick Rodney, one of her New York set, comes to ask her to marry him. She sends him back. But somehow the smaller city festivities pall. The bigness of New York calls, and she returns.

Both Allison and the Rev. Smith Boyd hasten to see her the night of her return. Boyd outstays Allison and pleads with Gail to marry him. Gail refuses, because she feels they would clash over their church views.

Meanwhile the New York newspapers have published scathing stories of the great profit the fashionable Market Square church is making out of its Vedder Court property.



The Ball of Fire

THE NEW NOVEL OF LOVE AND HIGH FINANCE
BY THE AUTHOR OF "WALLINGFORD" AND HIS WIFE

By George Randolph Chester
and Lillian Chester

ILLUSTRATED BY M. LEONE BRACKER

THE doves which in summer flitted about the quiet little vestry yard of Market Square Church, and cooed over the vestry door, would have flown away had they been at home; for this was a stormy affair, with loud voices and clashing wills and a general atmosphere of tensi-ty which was somewhat at variance with the red-robed figure of the Good Shepherd in the pointed window of the vestry. The late arrival was Joseph G. Clark, and his eyes sought those of banker Chisholm before he nodded to the others. The Reverend Smith Boyd, who was particularly straight and tall to-day, and particularly in earnest, paused long enough for the slight disturbance to subside, and then he finished his speech.

"That is my unalterable position in the matter," he declared. "If Market Square Church has a mission, it is the responsibility for these miserable human wrecks whom we have made our wards."

"We can't feed and clothe them," objected banker Chisholm, whose white mutton-chops already glowed pink from the anger-reddened skin beneath.

"It doesn't pay to pauperize the people," supplemented Willis Cunningham, stroking his sparse Vandyke complacently. Cunningham, whose sole relationship to economics consisted in permitting his secretary to sign checks, had imbibed a few principles which sufficed for all occasions.

"I do not wish to pauperize them," returned the Rector. "I am willing to accept the shame of having the city show Market Square Church its duty in exchange for the pleasure of replacing the foul tenements in Vedder Court with clean ones."

Joseph G. Clark glanced again at Chisholm.

"They'd be dirty again in ten years," he observed. "If we build the new type of sanitary tenement we shall have to charge more rent, or not make a penny of profit; and we can't get more rent because the people who would pay it will not come into that neighborhood."

"Are we compelled to make a profit?" retorted the Rector. "Is it necessary for Market Square Church to remain perpetually a commercial landlord?"

The vestry gazed at the Reverend Smith Boyd in surprised disapproval. Their previous rector had talked like that, and the Reverend Smith Boyd had been a great relief.

"So long as the church has property at all, it will meet with that persistent charge," argued Chisholm. "It seems to me that we have had enough of it. My own inclination would be to sell the property outright, and take up slower, but less personal, forms of investment."

Old Nicholas Van Ploon, sitting far enough away from the table to fold his hands comfortably across his tight vest, screwed his neck around so that he could glare at the banker.

"No," he objected, for the Van Ploon millions had been accumulated by the growth of tall office buildings out of a worthless Manhattan swamp. "We should never sell the property."

"There are a dozen arguments against keeping it," returned the nasal voice of old Joseph G. Clark. "The chief one is the necessity of making a large investment in these new tenements."

The Reverend Smith Boyd rose again, shutting the light from the red robe of the Good Shepherd out of quietly concentrated Jim Sargent's eyes.

"I object to this entire discussion," he stated. "We have a moral obligation which forbids us to discuss matters of investment and profit within these walls as if we were a lard trust. We have neglected our moral obligation in Vedder Court, until we are as blackened with sin as the thief on the cross."

Shrewd old Rufus Manning looked at the young rector curiously. He was puzzled over the change in him.

"Don't swing the pendulum too far, Doctor Boyd," Manning reminded him, with a great deal of kindness. These two had met often in Vedder Court. "Our sins, such as they are, are more passive than active."

It was, of course, old Nicholas Van Ploon who fell back again on the stock argument which had been quite sufficient to soothe his conscience for all these years.

"We give these people cheaper rent than they can find anywhere in the city."

"We should continue to do so, but in

cleaner and more wholesome quarters," quickly returned the Rector. "This is the home of all these poverty stricken people whom Market Square Church has taken under its shelter, and we have no right to dispose of it."

"That's what I say." And Nicholas Van Ploon nodded his round head. "We should not sell the property."

"We cannot for shame, if for nothing else," agreed the Rector, seizing on every point of advantage to support his intense desire to lift the Vedder Court derelicts from the depth of their degradation. "We lie now under the disgrace of having owned property so filthy that the city was compelled to order it torn down. The only way in which we can redeem the reputation of Market Square Church is to replace those tenements with better ones, and conduct them as a benefit to the people rather than to our own pockets."

"That's a clever way of putting it," commended Jim Sargent. "It's time we did something to get rid of our disgrace." He had been the most uncomfortable of all these vestrymen in the past few days, for the disgrace of Market Square Church had been a very reliable topic of conversation in Gail Sargent's neighborhood.

The nasal voice of smooth-shaven old Joseph G. Clark drawled into the little silence which ensued.

"What about the cathedral," he asked, and the hush which followed was far deeper than the one which he had broken. Even the Reverend Smith Boyd was driven to some fairly profound thought. His bedroom and his study were lined with sketches of the stupendously beautiful cathedral, the most expensive in the world, in which he was to disseminate the gospel. "Suppose we come back to earth," resumed Clark, who had built the Standard Cereal Company into a monopoly of all the bread stuffs by that process. "If we rebuild, we set ourselves back in the cathedral project ten years. You can't wipe out what you call our disgrace, even if you give all these paupers free board and compulsory baths. My proposition is to telephone for Edward E. Allison, and tell him we're ready to accept his offer."



"I'd like to say something jolly before I go," Dick Rodley had said, "but I can't seem to think of it."
And now Gail was crying a little as she went up the stairs.

"Not while I'm a member of this vestry," declared Nicholas Van Ploon, swiveling himself to defy Joseph G. Clark. "We don't sell the property."

"I put Mr. Clark's proposition as a motion," interposed W. T. Chisholm, and in the heated argument which ensued, the Good Shepherd in the window, taking advantage of the shifting sun, removed from the room the light of the red robe.

In the end, the practical minded members won over the sentimentalist—if Nicholas Van Ploon could be classed under that heading—and Allison was telephoned. Before they were through wrangling over the decision to have him meet them, Allison was among them. One might almost have thought that he had been waiting for the call; but he exchanged no more friendly glances with Clark and Chisholm, of the new International Transportation Company, than he did with any of the others.

"Well, Allison, we've about decided to accept your offer for the Vedder Court property," stated Manning.

"I haven't made you any, but I'm willing," returned Allison.

Jim Sargent drew from his pocket a memorandum slip.

"You offered us a sum which, at three and a half per cent, would accrue, in ten years, to forty-two million dollars," he reminded the president of the Municipal Transportation Company. "That figures to a spot-cash proposition of thirty-one millions with a repeating decimal of one; so somebody will have to lose a cent."

"That offer is withdrawn," said Allison.

"I don't see why," objected Jim Sargent. "The property is as valuable for your purposes as it ever was."

"I don't dispute that, but in that offer I allowed you for the income earning capacity of your improved property. Since that capacity is stopped, I don't feel obliged to pay you for it, or, in other words, to make up to you the loss which the city has compelled you to sustain."

"There is some show of reason in what Allison says," observed Joseph G. Clark.

Chisholm leaned forward, with his el-

bows on the table, around the edge of which were carved the heads of winged cherubs.

"What is your present offer?"

"Twenty-five million, cash."

"We refuse!" announced Nicholas Van Ploon, bobbing his round head emphatically.

"I'm not so sure that we do," returned Clark. "I have been studying property values in that neighborhood, and I doubt if we can obtain more."

"Then we don't sell!" insisted Nicholas Van Ploon.

"I scarcely think we wish to take up this discussion with Mr. Allison until we have digested the offer," observed the quiet voice of Manning, and, on this hint, Allison withdrew.

He smiled as he heard the voices which broke out in controversy the moment he had closed the door behind him. Being so near, he naturally called on Gail Sargent, and found her entertaining a little tea party of the gayest and brightest that Aunt Helen Davies could bring together.

She came into the little reception "cozy" to meet Allison, smiling with pleasure. There seemed to be a degree of wistfulness in her greeting of her friends since the night of her return.

"Of course I couldn't overlook an opportunity to drop in," said Allison, shaking her by both hands, and holding them while he surveyed her critically. There was a tremendous comfort in his strength.

"So you only called because you were in the neighborhood," bantered Gail.

"Guilty," he laughed. "I've just been paying attention to my religious duties."

"I wasn't aware that you knew you had any," returned Gail, sitting in the shadow of the window-jamb. Allison's eyes were too searching.

"I attend a vestry meeting now and then," he replied, and then he laughed shortly. "I'd rather do business with forty corporations than with one vestry. A church always expects to conduct its share of the negotiations on a strictly commercial basis, while it expects you to mingle a little charity with your end of the transaction."

"The Vedder Court property," she

guessed, with a slight contraction of her brows.

"Still after it," said Allison, and talked of other matters.

Jim Sargent returned, and glancing into the little reception tête-à-tête as he passed, saw Allison and came back.

"I didn't expect to see you so soon," wondered Allison.

"We broke up in a row," laughed Jim Sargent. "Clark and Chisholm were willing to accept your price, but the rest of us listened to Doctor Boyd and Nicholas Van Ploon, and fell. We insist on our cathedral, and Doctor Boyd's plan seems the best way to get it, though even that may necessitate a four or five years' delay."

"What's his plan?" asked Allison.

"Rebuilding," returned Sargent. "We can put up tenements good enough to pass the building inspectors and to last fifteen years. With the same rents we are now receiving, we can offer them better quarters, and, as Doctor Boyd suggested, redeem ourselves from some of the disgrace of this whole proceeding. Clever, sensible idea, I think."

Gail was leaning forward, with her fingers clasped around her knee. Her brown eyes had widened, and a little red spot had appeared in either cheek. Her red lips were half parted, as she looked up in wonder at her Uncle Jim.

"Is that the plan upon which they have decided?" And Allison glanced at his watch.

"Well, hardly," frowned Sargent. "We couldn't swing Clark and Chisholm. At the last minute, they suggested that we might build lofts, and the impending fracas seemed too serious to take up just now; so we've tabled the whole thing."

Allison smiled, and slipped his watch back in his pocket.

"It's fairly definite, however, that you won't sell," he concluded.

"Not at your figure," laughed Sargent. "If we took your money, Doctor Boyd would be too old to preach in the new cathedral."

"He'll pull it through some way," declared Allison. "He's keen as a razor."

Neither gentlemen had noticed Gail. She had settled back in her chair during

these last speeches, weary and listless, and overcome with a sense of some humiliation too evasive to be properly framed even in thought. She had a sense that she had given away something vastly precious, and which would never be valued. Neither did they notice that she changed suddenly to relief. She had been justified in her decision!

She took the reins of conversation herself after Uncle Jim had left, and entertained Allison so brightly that he left with impatience at the tea party which monopolized her.

Later, when the Reverend Smith Boyd dropped in, he met with a surprising and disconcerting vivacity. In his eyes there was pain and suffering and inexpressible hunger, but in hers there was only dancing frivolity—a little too ebullient, perhaps, if he had been wise enough to know; but he was not.

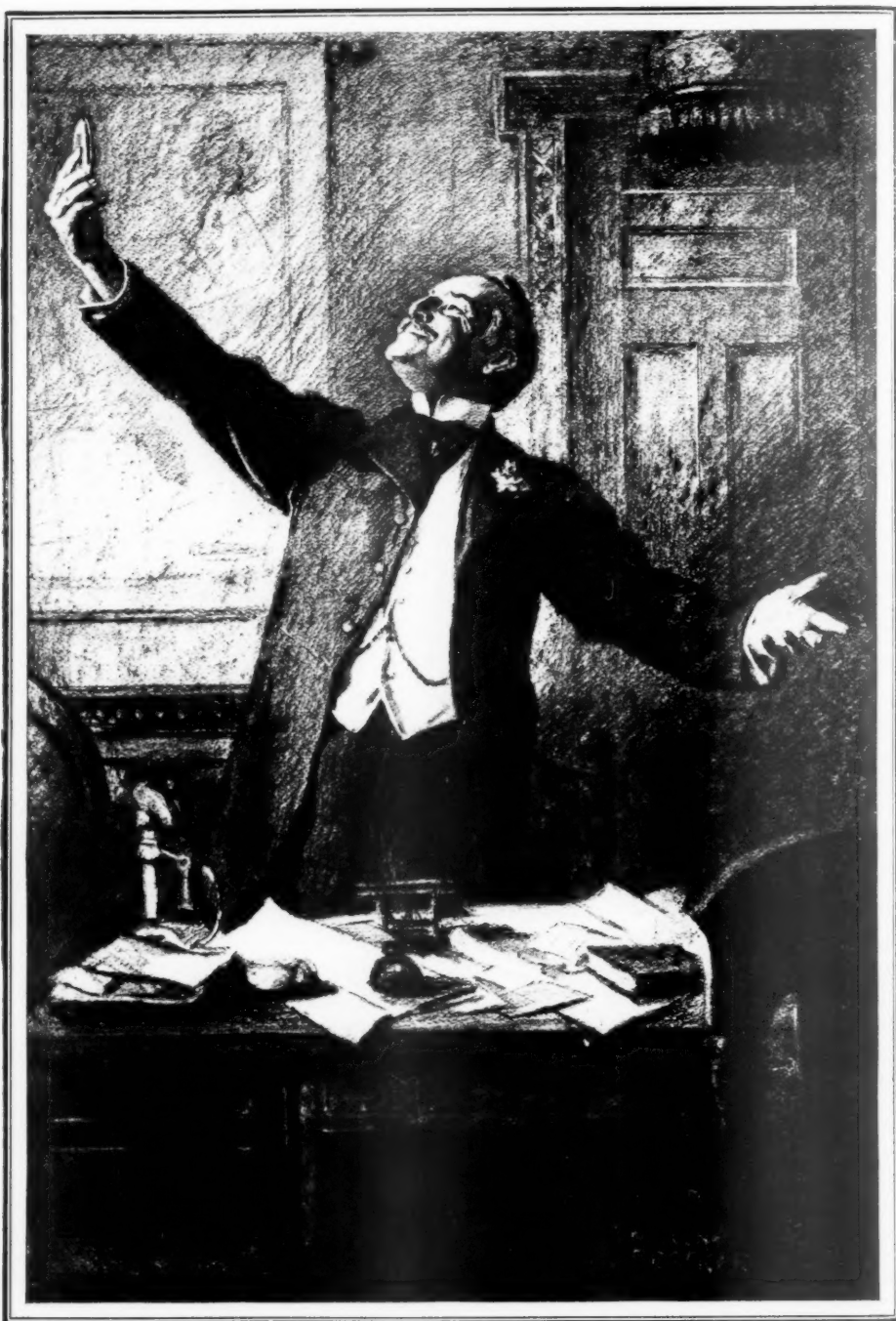
CHAPTER XXIII

A Series of Gaieties.

GAIETY consists in rising in the morning so tired that it takes three hours of earnest work with a maid, a masseuse, a physical directress, and a hair dresser, before one can produce a spontaneous silvery laugh—which is never required, expected or considered good form before two P. M.

Gail Sargent went in for gaiety, and, moreover, she enjoyed it. She rode, she drove, she went calling and received, she attended teas and gave them, she dined out and entertained; in the name of her eager Aunt Grace, she went to theatres, the opera, concerts, and the lively midnight cafés which had all gone nervously insane with freak dancing; she attended balls, house parties, and all the in-between diversions which her novelty-seeking friends could discover or invent; and she flirted outrageously! She used her eyes and the pretty pout of her red lips and the toss of her head, and all the wiles of coquetry, to turn men into asses; and she enjoyed that too! It was a part of her feminine birthright to enter with zest into this diversion, and it was only envy which criticised her.

Aunt Helen Davies, who knew her



Intoxicated with a sense of his own power, he went back into his study, and drew from a drawer a photograph. "Only a little longer, Gail!" And he saluted the photograph. "Gail, the maker of maps!" he said

world by chapter and verse, stood behind the scenes of all this active vaudeville, and applauded. It was at the opera that Aunt Helen could no longer conceal her marvel.

"My dear," she said, under cover of the throbbing music of "*Thais*," "I have never seen anything like you!"

"I don't quite know whether to take that as a compliment or not," laughed Gail, who had even, in her new stage of existence, learned to pay no attention to music.

"The remark was not only intended to be complimentary, but positively gushing," replied Aunt Helen, returning with a smile the glance of their hostess, the stiff Miss Van Ploon. "After two weeks of the gayest season I have ever witnessed, you are as fresh and vivacious as when you started."

"It's a return to first principles," stated Gail, considering the matter seriously. "I've discovered the secret of success in New York, either commercial or social. It is to have an unbreakable constitution."

The dapper little Marquis, who was laying a very well conducted siege for the heart and hand of Miss Van Ploon, leaned over Gail's velvet shoulder and whispered something in her ear. Gail leaned back a trifle to answer him, her deep brown eyes flashing up at him, her red lips adorably curved, that delicate color wavering in her cheeks; and Mrs. Davies, disregarding entirely the practiced luring of the dapper little Marquis, who was as harmless as a canary bird, viewed Gail with admiration.

Houston Van Ploon, surveying Gail with pride, made up his mind about a problem which he had been seriously considering. Gail Sargent, taken point by point, appearance, charm, manner, disposition and health, had the highest percentages of perfection of any young woman he had ever met, an opinion in which his father and sister had agreed, after several solemn family discussions.

Nicholas Van Ploon leaned over to his daughter.

"She has dimples," he catalogued, nodding his round head in satisfaction and clasping his hands comfortably over his broad white evening waistcoat.

Dick Rodley interrupted into the box with Lucile and Arly, just as *Thais* started for the convent, and they were only the forerunners of a constant stream which, during the intermission, came over to laugh with Gail, and to look into her sparkling eyes, and exchange repartee with her, and enjoy that beauty which was like a fragrance.

Who was the most delighted person in the Van Ploon box? Aunt Helen Davies! She checked off the eligibles, counting them, estimating them, judging the exact degree in which Gail had interested them, and the exact further degree Gail might interest them if she chose. Gail, standing, was a revelation to-night, not alone to Nicholas Van Ploon, who nearly dislocated his neck in turning to feast his gaze on her in numb wonder, but to Aunt Helen herself. Gail wore an Egyptian costume, an absurdly straight thing fashioned like a cylinder, but which, in some mysterious and alluring way, suggested the long, slender, gracefully curving lines which it concealed. The foundation color was tarnished gold, on which were beaded panels in dark blue stones, touched here and there with dull red. Encircling her small head was an Egyptian tiara, studded in the front with lapis lazuli and deep red corals, with one great fire opal glowing in the center; and her shining brown hair was waved well below the ears, and smoothly caught under around the back of her perfect neck. On her cheeks and on her lips were the beautiful natural tints which were the envy and despair of every pair of lorgnette-shielded eyes, but on her eyelashes, as part of her costume, Gail had daringly lined a touch of that intense black which is ground in the harems of old Nile.

"You're the throb of the evening, sweetheart," Dick Rodley laughed down at her, as they stood at the door of the box, with the function passing in and out.

"Thank you, Dicky dear," she responded, smiling up at him. Since her earnest gaieties had begun, Dick had been her most frequent companion. He was one of the component members of that zestful little set which included Gail, Lucile and Arly, and the bubbling little

Mrs. Babbitt, the cherub-cheeked Marion Kenneth, the entirely sophisticated Gwen Halstead, and whatever nice men happened to be available. Dick and Ted and Gerald were, of course, always available.

"I'm disappointed," complained Dick. "You don't blush any more when I am affectionate with you."

"One looses the trick here," she laughed. "The demands are too frequent."

He bent a little closer to her.

"I'm going to propose to you again to-night," he told her.

"You're so satisfactory," she returned carelessly. "But really, Dicky, I don't see how you're going to manage it, unless you perform it right here, and that's so conventional."

"Play hookey," he mischievously advised. "I'll tell you what we'll do. You shove Houston out of the house the minute you get in the house; then Lucile and Ted and Arly and Gerald and I will sail up and carry you off to supper, after which I'll take you home and propose."

Gail's eyes snapped with the activity of that disloyal program, and the little silvery laugh, for which she had been so noted, welled up from her throat.

"You have to wait around the corner until he goes away," she insisted.

"I'll bring a guitar if you like," Dick promised, with so much avidity that she feared, for an instant, that he might do it.

"You're monopolizing me scandalously," she protested. "Go away." And she turned immediately to the dapper little Marquis, who was enduring the most difficult evening of his life. Gail was so thoroughly adapted to a grand affair, one in which he could avow universes; and the Miss Van Ploon was so exciting.

The study door was open when Houston Van Ploon sedately escorted Mrs. Davies and Gail into the library, one of those rooms which appoints itself the instinctive lounging place of all family inmates. Gail turned up her big eyes in sparkling acknowledgment as the punctilious Van Ploon took her cloak, and, at that moment, as she stood gracefully poised, she caught the gaze of the Rev-

erend Smith Boyd fixed on her with such infinite longing that it distressed her. She did not want him to suffer.

Uncle Jim strode out with a hearty greeting, and at the sound of the voices of no one but Gail and Mrs. Davies and Housto Van Ploon, old "Daddy" Manning appeared in the doorway, followed by the Rector.

"The sweetest flower that blows in any dale," quoted "Daddy" Manning, patting Gail's hand affectionately.

The Rector stood by, waiting to greet her, after Manning had monopolized her a selfish moment, and the newly aroused eye of color in him seized upon the gold and blue and red of her straight Egyptian costume, and recognized in them a part of her endless variety. The black on her lashes—he was close enough to see that; and he marveled at himself that he could not disapprove.

Gail was most uncomfortably aware of him in this nearness, but she turned to him with a frank smile of friendship.

"This looks like a conspiracy," she commented, glancing towards the study.

"It's an offensively innocent one," returned Manning, giving the Rector but small chance. "We're discussing the plans for new Vedder Court tenements."

"Oh!" observed Gail, and radiated a distinct chill; whereupon the Reverend Smith Boyd, divesting himself of some courteous compliment, exchanged inane adieus with Mrs. Davies and young Van Ploon, and took his committee back into the study.

Mrs. Davies remained but a moment or so. She even seemed eager to retire; and, as she left the library, she cast a hopeful backward glance at the dancing-eyed Gail and the correct young Van Ploon, who, with his Dutch complexion and his blonde English mustache and his stalwart American body, to say nothing of his being a Van Ploon, represented, to her, the ideal of masculine perfection. He was an eligible who never did anything a second too early or a second too late, or deviated by one syllable from the exact things he should say.

If the anxious Aunt Helen had counted on any important results from

(Continued on page 1018, of this issue)

The Personal Element— *and* McNute



By JOHN
BARTON
OXFORD

Author of "The Old Order," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY GRANT T. REYNARD

THE Savannah boat had come in late once again, and, since the Savannah boats had suffered far more than their usual share of storms and delays of late, the freight sheds were piled high with bales and boxes and tubs and barrels, many of them marked "Rush." The boat was going out at five in the afternoon and a double gang of stevedores labored and sweated and trundled and cursed, while outside, the winter afternoon grew grayer and colder and the first flakes of dry snow came sifting down.

McNute, at three o'clock, had perched himself on a pile of bags to rest momentarily while he ate the last thick beef sandwich left in his dinner-pail.

He was tremendous of frame, wide of shoulder, slender hipped and huge of torso. A mop of sandy hair crowned his sweating, freckled face. Even beneath the thick shirt of blue flannel and the dun-colored corduroy trousers, you could see the subtle, squirming play of the big muscles whenever he moved. He stood six feet three in his stocking feet and owned to twenty-seven years' experience in this vale of tears.

A glutton for work was McNute, worth any three other longshoremen when it came to a rush job like this—tireless, quick of wit, knowing just which boxes and cases to take first, and how to trim them quickly and surely, once they were in the hold. Also he knew all the vagaries of crates and

sacks, just how to catch them to the best advantage and how to pile them deeply on the heavy truck he trundled back and forth across the gang-plank. A veritable ox of a man, yet without that patient creature's docility or stolidness.

To-day McNute for once was tired. As he sat there on the pile of gunny-bags, smelling villainously of fertilizing phosphates, he was aware of a laxity of the great muscles of his body and a heaviness of his eyelids.

McNute was the type of man who must burn up his tremendous energy somehow, and, since there had been no boat in for two days before the Savannah boat arrived, he had proceeded to stage the conflagration at a place up the Avenue called "The Haven." He had burned up rather more energy than he intended, and incidentally he had put down considerably more raw spirits than was his wont, and his wont was nothing in any way parsimonious, rest assured.

Wherefore, feeling his eyelids drooping lower, he glanced quickly about him, saw neither of the boss stevedores in sight, lay back comfortably on the pile of phosphate bags and sighed luxuriously, with a certain comfortable cat-like curling up of his big legs.

Fifteen minutes later, Andy Flynn, boss of the extra stevedores who had been rushed to the job of getting the cargo aboard, spied him there. Flynn rushed over roaring maledictions:

"Come on now, ye drunken swine, get

up outer that and get busy! Ye're not paid to snooze on a pile av bags, especially at a time like this. Up wit' ye, ye—"

Flynn drew back one horny doubled fist and was about to drive it into the sleeper's huddled body just below the ribs, when his arm was caught and forced to his side.

"Here, Flynn, here! None av that! Ye'll be makin' the worst mistake av yer life!" said Tim Riordan, the boss of the regular gang of stevedores close behind him. "That felly's McNute—Rory McNute, and a bad wan if ye go to startin' annything wit' him. Poke him wan like ye was thinkin' av doin' and he'd come up off av there and murder ye cold and rip up this shed so its best friends would never recognize it. The best lad av the whole blame bunch is McNute, but ye can't do no drivin' wit' him. Ye've gotter coax him! I've him to me!"

Riordan approached the sleeper and gently shook him by the shoulder.

"Are ye tired out, lad?" he inquired not ungently. "Sure, it must be a cruel day's wor-rk whin Rory McNute goes to layin' down on it. But we've got the most av it in her, praise heaven, and if ye'll be lindin' us a hand till the hour strikes, we'll have her outer here be foive, I'm thinkin'."

McNute struggled up, shamefacedly and rubbing his eyes.

"Mon, dear, I'd na the wee-est inteentions o' sleepin'," said he. "I but just squatted me here for a bit of breath and—"

He jumped off the bags and grabbed his truck by the handles. Riordan grinned a moment later as he saw that same truck trundled across the gang-plank with a load on it that any three other men in the gang could not have handled.

"Ye see!" said Riordan to Andy Flynn. "Handle McNute right and he'll do the wor-rk av anny three min for ye; but cross him, or be unfair to him, or try anny violence wit' him and—well, 'twould be as well to have yer prayers said before ye done it. We'll have the ould girl outer here on the afternoon tide after all, I'm thinkin'. And some av the other av thim tubs better be

crawlin' up this way. What a mess o' stuff has piled up here be reason av the delays."

Fleet Street leads off the Avenue just below the Savannah Line docks. And half way up Fleet Street is the Anchor Watch Mission. It is just a bare little room on the street floor of a tenement house—an Italian grocery it was, originally. Its walls are plastered with more or less hopeful and more or less colored mottoes and bits of Scriptural text; it has a little pulpit-like platform, a double row of decrepit settees, a wheezy little old melodeon and a round-bellied stove that makes it warm and cozy on the coldest winter day.

The Eastern Evangelical Association points with pride to the good work that has been done in this bare little room. It has a long and enviable record of the hungry—both in soul and body—fed, the sick visited, the dead buried. There are at present no less than three live wires in the Eastern Evangelical Association's organization who can trace their beginnings in better things to an errant or merely curious straying into the Anchor Watch Mission.

Wherefore, the Eastern Evangelical Association pays good heed to the little ex-Italian grocery on Fleet Street. And when the returns from it began to fall off, when its decrepit settees began to be scantily populated and its luster to grow a trifle dimmed, the Association promptly withdrew Mr. Allan Crowther, its incumbent representative in charge there, and sent in his stead young Mr. Ellsworth, a thoroughly up-to-date young man, with a warm heart, a silver tongue, and, best of all, a splendid head for business organization—for even the salvation of souls, to be successful, must be conducted more or less strictly on business principles.

Mr. Ellsworth was a live wire in every sense of the word. The Eastern Evangelical Association expected much of him; also, since the Anchor Watch Mission had been one of its very best talking points, it sent young Mr. Ellsworth thither.

Young Mr. Ellsworth looked over the place and found it suited to his ideas.

He liked the atmosphere; the rows of settees, the texts on the wall, the little worn platform, where so much reform history had been made, all seemed to him an admirable and suitable setting for the work in hand. The melodeon, when he tried it, he found needed tuning. Also, ancient and angular Miss Merrow, who wore yellow cotton roses on her hat winter and summer, and who presided at the melodeon during the mission services, seemed to strike a false note. Mr. Ellsworth repaired him to the office of the secretary of the Association which had sent him here.

"I'm going to have the melodeon tuned," said Mr. Ellsworth. "And I wish," he added thoughtfully, "I might have some one else beside Miss Merrow to play it. I'm afraid Miss Merrow is a little out of place down there. It requires some one younger, fresher—yes, to be perfectly frank with you—prettier. The personal element is the whole thing in this work, especially in the earlier stages. Sea-faring men, you know, are proverbially susceptible to a pretty face. It would mean a whole lot to have one, and a clear young voice at the melodeon to lead the singing down there."

The secretary thoroughly believed both in young Mr. Ellsworth and his methods.

"How would Miss Durkee do?" he asked.

"The very one," Ellsworth enthused.

Therefore, angular but conscientious Miss Merrow, with the yellow cotton roses on her hat, went back to the main office of the Eastern Evangelical Association, where she filed cards in an index with the same enthusiasm with which she had recently presided over the wheezy melodeon at the Mission; and Miss Durkee, who had been doing this work, young, pretty, rosy-checked and just turned twenty, went down to the mission to finger the yellowed bone keys, lift a thinly sweet soprano voice in leading the bellowed choruses in gospel hymns sung by voices which had grown hoarse on the seven seas, and otherwise further the work of the Evangelical Association in general, and the labors of young Mr. Ellsworth in particular. He, if the truth were known—as it wasn't—was held in even warmer regard by Miss

Durkee than he was by the Eastern Evangelical Association.

At five o'clock the Savannah boat, crammed full to her hatches, went poking down the harbor in the teeth of a rather too healthy young snowstorm. Wearily the overworked stevedores betook themselves away. McNute, his throat parched, a burning pain behind his eyes and a thick, unpleasant taste on his tongue, stretched himself when the last truckload of phosphate bags went aboard, yawned loudly, flexed his big muscles, grinned and made straight for "The Haven."

It was after seven when he came out. The snow was coming down in business-like fashion, not gustily, but steadily now, and piling up amazingly in curl and gutter.

McNute stood staring at it for a moment blankly, for the amount of raw spirits he could tuck away and still keep his feet was amazing. He felt warm and glowing and pleasantly befogged as to mind, just sufficiently befogged for the world to seem a pretty rosy place and life something to be desired for its bare self.

Bed and sleep! They seemed to him at the moment the choicest gifts of the gods. He lurched down the Avenue, past the black gates of the Savannah docks and turned into Fleet Street. He was humming to himself tunelessly as he went.

Half way up the street he stopped short. A whooping chorus was welling out into the snowy night through two broad and glowing windows.

Come with thy sins to the fountain;
Come with thy burden of grief—

McNute heard, and above the roar of the men's voices, trailing valiantly after the melodeon, McNute caught a thin, clear, penetrating soprano, of what seemed to him at the moment peculiar sweetness.

He gripped an iron guard-rail before the windows to steady himself, and peered in upon the regular nightly meeting at the Anchor Watch.

At the melodeon he caught sight of Miss Durkee. Miss Durkee's hat was not

like the austere, yellow-cotton-rose-embossed affair of her predecessor; it was a chic little toque of fur, with some sort of a little up-sticking plume to give it a pert effect. Also as she played the melodeon and led the roof-shaking singing, Miss Durkee's dark eyes glowed and her cheeks flushed and her even white teeth flashed between red lips.

McNute, his nose pressed against the windows, hiccupped glowingly.

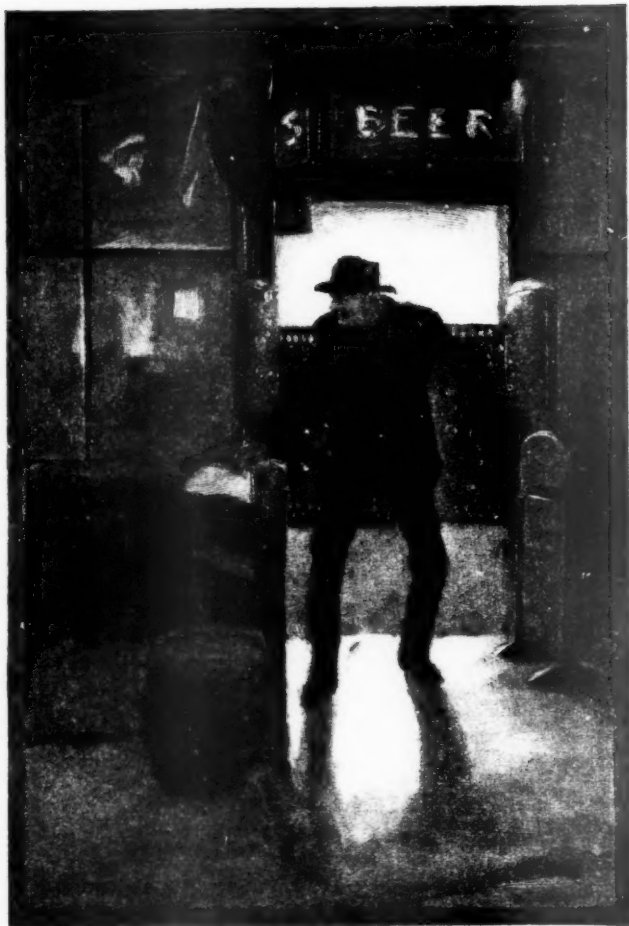
"Noo, yon's a bonnie lassie," he mumbled thickly, with a nod of his head towards the girl at the melodeon, "a braw, bonnie lassie or I'm a dod-blasted son of a goon. I maun go in—sure, 'tis free—I maun go in and bide a wee and look her over closer and hear her seeng again a bit."

With McNute, to think was to act. He lurched through the door, stumbled to the rearmost settee, walked heavily over three pairs of feet and collapsed heavily down while the seat groaned complainingly beneath his big bulk.

"A braw wee lassie," McNute confided to himself again, craning his neck to get a sight of her, "and a voice to make the holy angeels weep."

He said it aloud, but fortunately the roaring chorus drowned it.

Then the singing came to an end. Ev-



It was after seven when he came out.

erybody sat down. A man stepped onto the little worn platform, read from the Scriptures and began to speak.

Miss Durkee had withdrawn farther behind the melodeon. McNute now could not manage, crane as he would, to get a satisfactory glimpse of her. The round-bellied stove was sending out a stifling heat. McNute's big, sandy head began to droop. Whatever he did—work or play—it was his custom to do enough for three men. To-night he had gone that rule even better. Back at "The Haven" he had drunk perhaps enough for any six ordinary men. Wherefore it is not at

all strange that he fell blissfully and peacefully and—to the snickered delight of his nearest neighbors on the settee—somewhat noisily asleep.

It was some time later when he awakened. The population of the settees had thinned out considerably. Some one was speaking to him in a low and pleasant voice. He glanced up, shamedly. It was the "bonnie braw lassie" of the melodeon, and she was leaning across the end of the settee towards him. On the other side of the room he could see the man who had read the Scriptures and spoken, similarly talking to men on that side.

"Are you quite satisfied with your life and what you are making it?" the girl was saying, and she was looking at McNute with gentleness and pity and something, too, that spoke of hope.

"Eh?" said he stupidly, rubbing his bleary eyes and sitting up.

"Are you satisfied with this life of yours?" she repeated.

"Aweel noo, aweel noo," said he with maudlin deliberation, "I canna say, off-hand. The hoors are long and the work hard—"

"You know I don't mean that," she said with a pretty smile and a little shake of her head. "I mean your real life—your inner life."

McNute looked her over with frank and very obvious approval.

"A braw, bonnie lassie," he muttered. She flushed slightly.

"Haven't you ever thought of a better life—ever wanted a better one?" she urged still softly.

"Seet doon," McNute invited.

Her color heightened, but she did as he bid.

The nearness of her, the soft sweetness of her, made him pull himself together. But a gleam of rollicking deviltry shone in his eyes.

He saw she was looking at his own big frame not wholly with disfavor.

"Would it, noo, make the wee-est deef-runce to you if I did?" he asked boldly. She looked at him steadily.

"It might," she said.

Instantly that rollicking gleam died from his eyes. He was gravity itself. He looked at her now rather differently. She saw his breath quicken.

"It maun," he muttered, "it maun, eh? If I thought it would—?"

"What would you do if you thought that?" she asked.

"I'd coom here every night," said he. "I'd coom here and I'd try—I'd try to—to be deef'runt."

"Come, then," she said, and her long-lashed eyes were downcast.

McNute grabbed the back of the settee before him, and so hard did he clutch it that the wood cracked beneath that giant grip.

"I weel," he said thickly. "I weel. I'll—I'll be deef'runt, lassie. I'm in no condection to-night to be here or to talk wi' ye. I apologize. But I'll come to-morrow night and the next and the next—deef'runt."

He arose, he bowed to her, he lurched to the door and went out. His head was whirling. He seemed fairly suffocating with some wonderful happiness.

"A bonnie braw lassie, a bonnie braw lassie!" he kept muttering to himself as he lurched along through the snow, for once ashamed of the wavering unsteadiness of his footsteps.

That was how the Anchor Watch Mission came to annex as one of its bright and shining lights a huge, sandy-haired young longshoreman, who answered to the name of Rory McNute.

The great voice which heretofore had boomed nightly in ribald jests through "The Haven" now lifted itself in raftershaking song and testimony at the Mission. McNute's old irresponsible ways fell from him as a cloak. He began to think serious thoughts. At the docks Tim Riordan noticed the change. He got McNute a chance bossing a gang of stevedores at the International Line docks. And the sort of boss stevedore this new Rory McNute made may easily be surmised.

So three months went past. Came a sleety Sunday in March. Once again the Savannah boats were in trouble and the freight sheds were piled high with waiting cargoes.

The *Mohican* had come in three days late, and Tim Riordan was rushing might and main to get a full cargo in her before she cleared Sunday night.



"So that's the game!" he roared. "They use you for that—eh? Do you know what ye are?—
A decoy—yah, a decoy."

Coming back from a hasty lunch at a little lunch-room just across from the docks at two that afternoon, he almost bumped into Rory McNute—Rory McNute in a spick and span tailored suit, immaculate linen, pointed patent-leather shoes on his big feet and a flower in his buttonhole.

Tim fell upon him with gladsome whoops.

"Rory, lad," he begged, "shed the joy rags ye're wearin' and come on an' lind a hand. The *Mohican's* goin' out at six and half her cargo not yet in her. Man, the loafers that's on the job! I'd give quadruple pay for a man like you for the rest of the afternoon. Come on, will ye?"

McNute's brow clouded. He squirmed uneasily in his new clothes.

"I'd like to, Tim," he said thoughtfully. "But 'tis the Sabba' Day. I'm boond the noo for the Meesion service—and—and there's another reason why I can't coom to-day. Wa'n't it for that other thing, I believe I'd coom and lend a hand, Sabba' Day or no."

"You know best," said Tim. "But if ye get through the service up there in time and find even an hour to spare come and gimme that; every little helps, especially from a man that can put in a cargo like you can."

At half-past three that afternoon the regular service at the Anchor Watch and its more intimate after-meeting of song and experience was over. The last loiterers were gone. Ellsworth was shaking down the stove before he left, to return later to the evening meeting. Miss Durkee was arranging the hymn books on the settees.

McNute waited until she had reached the rear settee before he joined her. He sat down and gently pulled her onto the settee beside him. Ellsworth had gone to the ante-room to wash his hands.

"'Tis coom," said McNute to the girl beside him. "I'm a boss-stevedore, drawin' doon good wages. I've put three hundred dollars in the bank. Noo we maun be married."

She drew away from him with a frightened gasp. He reached for her hand, but she was too quick. She had jumped from the settee and stood clutching the back of it.

"Mr. McNute!" she panted chinglingly and pleadingly. "*Mr. McNute!*"

"Aint I doon right?" he said. "Aint I lived the right sort of life? Or don't ye dare trust me till I've lived it longer?"

"Oh, yes," she said hurriedly. "You've been splendid—and you've done such good work among the other men here. You've—"

"Then why—" McNute began.

"Oh, I never thought of this—never even thought of it. I—"

"Not at the first?" he said.

"Never," she panted.

His face suddenly contorted. His eyes blazed. He towered over her until she shrank away, trembling, frightened.

"So that's the game!" she roared. "They use ye for that—eh? Do you know what ye are—a decoy—yah, a decoy!"

His wrath flared redly; he caught up a settee and split it in twain across his knee.

"'Tis shameful!" he panted. "Ye knew what I thought, and yet ye let me go on—to swell the showin' of thees place. I'll go! I'm doon with the meesion and the likes of you; but before I go I'll leave my mark on it."

Out shot his long arms and down came three framed texts to crash to splinters on the floor; then he threw up a heel and kicked out the stove funnel.

Ellsworth came running from the back room.

"McNute! McNute!" he panted in surprise.

McNute picked him up, whirled him aloft and sat him down so hard on the melodeon that one of its legs snapped short and Ellsworth had not breath enough in his body to protest.

And then it was as if a whirlwind went through the place. Gas globes tinkled; chandeliers were torn out by the roots; the front windows went crashing to the sidewalk; the desk was upset and broken; McNute in his rage even ripped up the worn boards of the platform.

Then he went out, aware that Miss Durkee was screaming hysterically, and rejoicing greatly thereat.

A bosom friend of the old unregenerate days lived farther down Fleet Street. Him, McNute, raving and curs-

ing now, sought out—him and the goodly quantity of certain supplies that might always be found by him.

It was an hour later when McNute lurched out of that doorway farther down Fleet Street. He had finished the last of the "supplies" and was bellowing loudly for more. Between bellows he sang liltily:

Coom wi' thy seems to the fountain;
Coom wi' thy burdens of grief—

And anon he paused in his singing to laugh uproariously.

Things were getting rather mixed in his head. Where was he going? Oh, yes—down to the Savannah Line docks to help out Tim Riordan. But this was the Sabba' Day; shame on Tim for workin' on the Sabba' Day! Things were getting more and more mixed as he headed for the docks.

He stumbled through the gates into the midst of the hurry and bustle of half a hundred hard-driven longshoremen, working against time to get the *Mohican's* cargo into her.

"'Tis the Sabba' Day," he roared at a man wheeling one of the loaded trucks. "Fie on ye! Shame on ye! Have respect for the Sabba' Day!"

He snatched the truck out of the man's hand and hurled it with its load far across the shed, and when the man protested, McNute picked him up and hurled him after it.

Men came running up from all directions, and McNute, howling joyfully, laid about him with his mighty fists.

Tim Riordan, running up, took one swift, comprehending glance at McNute and telephoned for the police—"Plenty of police," was the way he put it.

And still McNute drove those mighty fists of his right and left, now borne to the planks of the shed, now wriggling loose and laying about him promiscuously again. And so the battle went on until the wagon arrived, and McNute, after herculean efforts on the part of six

stalwart patrolmen, was bundled in.

Off rattled the wagon with McNute earnestly and tunelessly inviting everyone within hearing to, "Coom wi' thy seems to the fountain," in that roaring, tuneless voice of his, which carried a good three blocks in either direction.

There is little else to tell.

At seven that evening the *Mohican* put to sea, shy a good third of her anticipated cargo.

At the same hour in the basement of Station 10, Rory McNute clutched at the iron bars before him and confided soulfully to the cell-man, who had just come thither to suggest less noise:

"She were a braw lassie—a bonnie, braw lassie, but naut' but a decoy, after all; just a decoy, mon dear. You know!"

And he winked meaningly at the cell-man. Then he bethought him to beguile the time with song. Whereupon his great, booming voice went echoing along the corridor:

Coom wi' thy seems to the fountain;
Coom wi' thy burdens of grief.
Bury them deep 'neath the waters—

"Naw, I'll na shut oop. Unhasp yon dure and coom in and try to make me," he invited with an unholy gleam in his bleared eyes.

The cell-man went down the basement, and with a great air of reluctant firmness began to couple a length of hose onto a fire-tap.

At the battered place which earlier that afternoon had been the Anchor Watch Mission, Mr. Ellsworth, having sent Miss Durkee home in a taxi, sat among the ruins, pondering deeply. He was seeing many things with a new and decidedly clearer vision. He had just decided that he'd better tell the secretary of the Eastern Evangelical Association that after all he'd better have Miss Merrow back to preside at the melodeon, yellow cotton roses and all.

"Angel"

THE STORY OF A BOY
WHO HATED HIS NAME

By Elizabeth Frazer

Author of "The Brand Blotter," "The Man House," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY MONTE CREWS

IS Cousin Legion's mishenry goin' with you to-morrow, Dad, to shoot mountain-lines? Can a mishenry shoot?"

"You just bet this missionary can shoot, son! He was out in China during the time of the Boxer uprising, and he shot five Chinks. Fast as their moon-faces rose up above the banisters, he blowed 'em plumb off. Had to, he says, to clean a way to the door."

The three of us, my friend Jim Wandless—in his day ranger, cattle-man, sheriff, miner and now president of the Ranchers' State Irrigation Company, and their reluctant and badgered nominee for the legislature—his five-year old son, and myself, were sitting in the dim, wistaria-scented gloom of the porch watching the moon rise from behind the huge, shadowy flank of Old Baldy. I had run down from the City to the little sage-brush town of Coyote, Jim's native lair, on a shooting expedition back into the mountains, and found my friend's ranch-house full, as usual, of a miscellaneous company, among them a missionary from China, home on leave of absence; a gentle, dove-eyed little elderly lady called Aunt Delia; and her son, a stalwart, blue-eyed young fellow who was running for county judge.

To Aunt Delia, who sat beside me at dinner, I had taken a great and immediate fancy. She was, I figured, one of those sweet, lovely, controllable natures, of a breed of woman fast vanishing off the face of the earth: intensely feminine, with little will of her own, pliant as a skein of silk in masculine hands, whose

chief end in life is to glorify man and serve him blissfully forever.

Mentioning these impressions to Wandless after supper, he surprised me with an extremely dry chuckle. That was all. He offered no remark. But presently, after a lengthening silence, he lifted up his face to the moon and laughed again. Before I could demand an explanation, Jimmy broke into the ring with his question on the missionary's shooting prowess, and the talk jumped over to China.

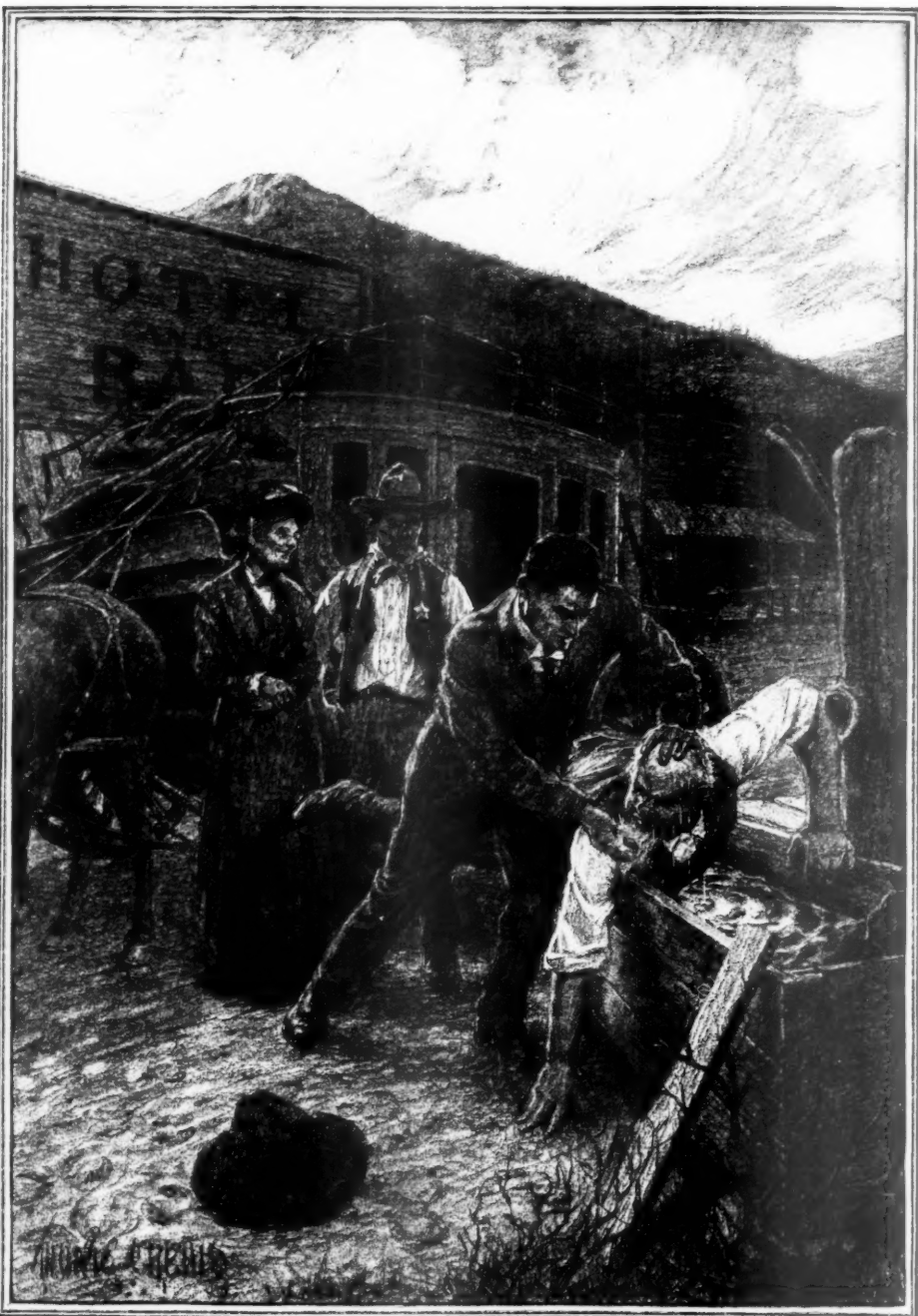
"Jimmy! Jimmy! Bed-time for little boys." Mrs. Jim's sweet, drawling voice floated down to us from the stair-top.

"There!" exclaimed Wandless. "The boss is calling. Beat it, you young hoodlum. Pad your hoof. *Prentito!* Hike!"

As his son vanished, Jim tilted his cane-bottom chair back into the deeper gloom of the porch and lighted one of my cigars. Thereafter, he was only a paling and glowing red spark, a pair of heels on the railing, and a genial, ambiguous voice.

"Legion," I began, still on the trail of Jim's curious laugh; for if I was mistaken in my judgment of Aunt Delia, I wanted to be convinced of my error. "—that's a blood-thirsty name for a kind lady to give her only child. There was a man in the Bible who had seven devils and they called him legion."

"That's him!" Jim chuckled again, quietly. "You guessed him to the life. It's the same party. Them seven devils used to tramp back and forth on Lee's insides, ramping and roaring and lashing their tails, red-eyed to bust through the



"I got a flash of arms and legs and blazing eyes sailing through the air, and the next thing I seen, Maitland had landed splash in the horse trough."

bars of their cage and chew up the whole town. And one day—"

"But surely," I interrupted, still intent on my point, "Aunt Delia didn't saddle him with such a name—that soft and tender little woman!"

Wandless removed my cigar from his lips and blew thin smoke volutes into the lucent air. "No," he admitted, "she didn't. I reckon," he added with a certain grim relish, "that seeing Lee's missionary is right here on the spot to corroborate my word, I'll have to elucidate Aunt Delia."

"My acquaintance begun one afternoon about sundown as I was standing by the horse-trough, waiting for the stage. I was town marshal of Coyote at the time, and also run the Blackstone Hotel, the general agency store, and the post-office, as side-shows just to keep my hand in. My wife Dulcie was expecting company—her aunt and a cousin that was studying for the ministry. Aunt Delia wrote that her dear son was plumb exhausted with the dreadful tax on his spiritual system, and she wanted to get him out to the clean, palpitating white stars and the holy calm of the desert. That letter got me and Dulcie going as to what kind of a stain-glass cathedral game we was up against. Boy preacher was a new brand of soft drink on me.

"The stage pulled in, and as old man Maitland lighted and handed me the mail-bag, he says with a grin, 'Got a new species of bird-o'-paradise inside for ye, Jim—a real, nat'ral, life-size, uncrated man-angel, the only livin' specimen in captivity. It's convoyed by a little high-steppin' nabob of a lady that alleges she's his maw.' He opened the stage-door. 'Here, Angel! Here, Angel!' he invites playful, like he was calling a pup.

"I got a flash of arms and legs and blazing eyes sailing through the air, and the next thing I seen, Maitland had landed splash in the horse-trough, and a pale, haughty young man with a wing-collar and a hard jaw was holding him by the whiskers and punching his nose under water.

"A little lady, all in gray like a dove, flutters down from the stage.

"'Oh, Angel,' she cries out, seeing

Maitland's legs milling round wild in the air, 'what's the matter? Did the gentleman fall?'

"'Yes, Mother,' says the boy, quiet, lifting his head, 'he lost his balance and fell. I'm helping him up.'

"'O—oh!' She turns to me, her eyes shining. 'It's my son Angel,' she explains in a proud little soft-pedal whisper, 'He's always like that. So quick in distress.'"

"'Seems pretty swift on the trigger, ma'am,' I allowed, polite. We watched him h'ist Maitland from the immersion-pool. 'Is he training for to be a Baptist?'

"The kid heard and threw me a wild and weary grin over his left shoulder. He'd got a side-holt on Maitland and was dragging him up the steps.

"'Your turn next, Jim!' he sings out in a sort of loaded voice.

"I was plain dumfounded. 'What's up, ma'am?' I asks, anxious. 'Has he et loco-weed on the way over? Is it bugs from over-religion? Or is it prickly heat?'

"'Oh, no!' She give out a foolish, tender little laugh. 'That's just his way. Angel is so enthusiastic!'

"'Hold on a bit, ma'am,' I begs desperate. 'Let's start straight. What's the kid's name—on the square?'

"'Angel!' says she, opening her eyes. 'I thought I told you. It's my son Angel.'

"'I know he's an angel son,' I breaks in, exasperated. 'The only son of a widow is always an angel. That's axiom thirteen in the Book of the Koran. What I'm desiring to know is what his plain, ordinary—'

"'That's it,' she murmurs, staring off dreamy, 'Angel. I didn't give him no middle name. I'll tell you how it happened. Do you remember them sweet lines, Cousin James, beginning: 'Where did you come from, baby dear?' I read them one night in bed, and all of a sudden it flashed across me what name to give my child! I sat right up and wrote it off on a slip of paper. Angel dear,' she says, hooking his arm, as the boy come up, 'how is the poor fallen man? I've been telling Cousin James about your name.'

"Angel choked, like he'd strangled on

a fish-bone, and got white around the mouth. He squared off with a jaw hard as a Boston bull's. 'A word with you, Jim,' he says. We stepped off a few paces. Angel dug into his vest pocket and hauled out a little white oblong card which he stuck into my fist.

"What's the game, son?" I asks mild. 'A Spanish duello, or a college cane-rush? Put me onto my cue.'

"It's—it's me," says the boy, giving me a charge-bay'nets glare. 'That's my name—Legion Northup. I—I wont be called Angel,'—he chokes up again—'except by my mother.'

"Glad to know you, Lee," I declares cordial, holding out my hand. 'Put it there. I didn't take no stock in that gentle pseudonym of Aunt Delia's. But why'd you go and jump on old Maitland like that? You'd ought to rattle before you strike.'

"I—I had to smash that old geezer, Jim!" he busts out. 'Mother told him all about me coming over, and I thought he'd shake the windows out of their sockets with his infernal chuckling. Seemed to think it awful damn funny! She told him my name was Angel and that I was studying to be a preacher. She tells everybody she meets: the butcher, the grocer, the street-car conductor. It's a little chunk of live red hell, Jim! And she does it because she loves me!'

"You can't lick your own mother. I've licked everybody else in sight. Ever since I can remember I've had to do that—lick folks to make them respect me. When I was twelve I got tired of it all and changed my name. I took one out of the Bible. The next year I was taken down with the measles, and while I was delirious she made me promise if I got well to be a preacher. So when I was old enough, she sent me off to the seminary. Three times I've worked up a scrap so's to get expelled, and each time Mother has come over and fixed it up with the faculty. She wont let me off. I can't even talk to her about it, Jim. I never could.' His blue eyes, staring off, had red lights in them and his lips pouted a little. 'No,' he repeats low and bitter, 'she wont let me off! She loves me—so she wont let me off!'

"Easy, son," I says. 'It's cool and easy

does it in this here climate. You come in and get outside some of Dulcie's fried cotton-tail, and then to-night me and you'll sneak out for a little *pasear* and confabulation by the light of the moon. You can lead a colt to water, but it takes a bigger little lady than Aunt Delia to make him drink if he gosh-dinged wont.'

Wandless paused to pitch the butt of his cigar over the railing. I passed him another silently, and held a light.

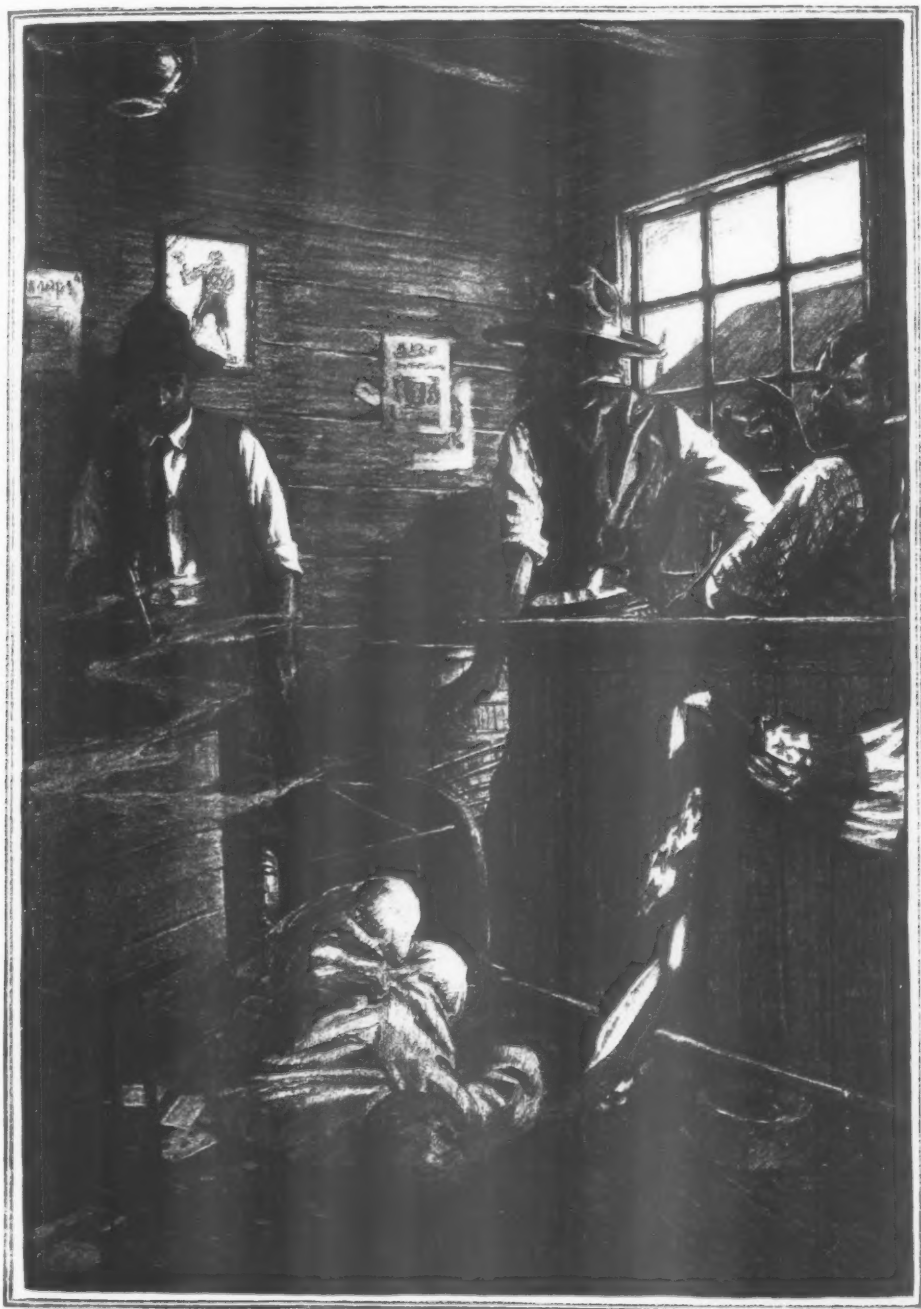
"The worst breed of females," resumed the voice behind the tiny red star, "that the Almighty ever let loose on the range, is the kind that's one-half angel and nine-tenths government mule. They're sweet as honey straight off the alfalfa, and they're harder than the Rock of Ages without a cleft for me or you or anybody. Once their minds is made up they never play a limit. What they need is the *strappado* and the water-cure and to run the gantlet every day at sundown. I'm referring to Aunt Delia. That doggone beatific little lady was as gamesome and sweet as a babbling brook, and as impervious to the light as lamp-black or old King Pharaoh. Me and Dulcie used to run day and night shifts trying to get the lariat over her and sit on her head until she'd promise solemn to leave Lee alone, to be a horse wrangler or a monte dealer or president of the Anti-Vivisectionist Society, as his own free will dictated. But shucks! we might as well 've tried to prise up the Maine with a shoe-horn.

"Dulcie started to worry. 'Jim,' she mentions to me one night, 'Lee's drinking.'

"He's taking it pretty hard," I admits. 'Aunt Delia's crowding him a bit close. When's this vacation of his up?'

"Next Saturday. Can't we do something? He's too fine to go like that. And, oh, Jim!" she adds, anxious, "don't let him carry your gun. The boy's at bay—he's dangerous.'

"Well, things drew on to a focus. On Saturday Aunt Delia packed her and Lee's trunks and I set them down on the front gallery ready for the eleven-thirty stage. That morning none of Dulcie's grub lay-out suited Lee. He gulped off a cup of coffee standing, and left the



Crumpled up on the floor lay Sid Lee, his head twisted to one side, his yellow heels kicking the air. And behind him, at a capsized table, stood Lee, paler than death, his smoking weapon still clamped to his fist.

house. An hour or so later, he drifted into the Blackstone where I was making up the mail, and sat into a game of poker with Cherry Kildare, who'd just blew in off the desert.

"Old Ramon, a one-eyed Greaser, had draped himself lop-shouldered against the door-jamb, and was watching me sullen and steady. Now and again he'd reach inside his black shirt careless, and nip a flea. He'd just got out from doing his bit for arson. 'Twas me sent him up, and consequent. I wouldn't have give six-bits for my life if old One-Eye ever caught me napping. Across the room by the bar, Sid Lee had tied up his pig-tail, and in jumper and loose cotton drawers, was squatting on his bare yellow toes tacking up red calico before the bar.

"It was a sizzling hot day, 105 at my desk. A snake-feeder that flew in the door was buzzing up and down the window-pane, and it and the heat got me nodding. Suddenly the peaceful atmosphere was wrecked by a shot and a quantity of howls that fetched me to my feet, gun in hand, blinking. First, I thought it was old Ramon trying pot-luck with me and I felt myself to see if he'd winged me. But it wasn't my tea-party that time. Crumpled up on the floor lay Sid Lee, his head twisted off to one side, his yellow heels kicking the air. And behind him, at a capsized table, stood Lee, paler than death, his smoking weapon still clamped to his fist. I walked over to the seat of war, and took hold of Lee's arm.

"'The first trick's yours, son,' I says, 'but I reckon I'll take the next.' I unclinchd his fingers and confiscated my six-shooter that Dulcie had warned me about. 'What'd you want to go messing up my new redwood floor, you blamed son of a typhoon? What have you got on the Chink?'

"Lee shoved back his soft black slouch hat; his forehead, smooth and white as a baby's, was beaded all over with little pearls of cold sweat. He kept his eyes glued on Sid Lee, who had stopped kicking, and rolled over on his face.

"'He asked me where was my diocese,' he muttered, 'and I—I drew before I thought.'

"'Sid Lee done that?' I asked, plumb

bedeviled, for that old saffron image never cracked his mug but once a month to ask for go catchee dopee.

"Cherry drewed me off to one side. He'd fitted a tired cigareet to his face and whispered over the top of it.

"'Twas me, Jim!' he says. 'Gimme all the humble-pie you got in the shop. I didn't go for to goad the kid—honest. But it was funny, *amigo*.'

"'Heard tell ye was aimin' and aspirin' for to be a Bible-shark, Buddy,' I says amiable, sortin' my cards. 'Are ye grub-staked to any pa'tickler diocese yet?' And with that he blazed up like benzine. He pulled his gun handy as a walrus, looks at me, sights the snake-feeder, and plugs the doggone Chink! But I reckon this here celebration's on me, Jim. Don't mind the boy. Can't ye see he's plumb embarrassed to death over his little miscue? I'll stand the obsequies of the Chink, seein' it was me, in a manner of speakin', that put him into the discard.' He pulled out his buckskin bag and begun to shake down the eagles. 'Say when!'

"I turned my back on him. 'Come along, son,' I says to Lee. 'You butted into a man-size game. Now you've got to pay the score.'

"We went out into the main street where all the population had poured. On the rim of the crowd stood Aunt Delia, moaning and wringing her hands.

"Lee saw his mother and grabbed my sleeve like a flash.

"'Jim, Jim,' he whispers, his voice shaking with excitement, 'there's one good thing—I've blocked the preacher game! She can't ever send me back now. I'm sorry about the Chink. But she can't send me back to the seminary.'

"'No,' I says dry, 'not to that brand of seminary. You're the State's meat now. And the State's got a little non-sectarian institoop up the valley where you'll do about a five years' course.'

"'All that,' he falters, 'for a Chink?'

"'All that,' I retorts grim, 'for a Chink, or a Chileno, or a Injun, or a Greaser, or any other off-color suit that reckless young jayhawkers like you don't think is human.'

"He looked at me steady. 'All right, Jim,' he says, and I hated my job.

"Cherry had bored his way through the crowd to Aunt Delia, who was crying and waving her arms.

"My son!" she moans. "My son's killed a man! Him that sheds red blood is a murderer!"

"Hell!" explodes Cherry. "Excuse me, ma'am. But there's no call to use hard words like that. Your son aint no murderer! He didn't git me—not by a full three foot of air."

"But," breathes Aunt Delia, tearful. "I thought—they told me—then it was all a mistake? Angel didn't kill a man?"

"Right, ma'am!" grins Cherry, cheerful, patting her shoulder. "You got it! He didn't kill nobody this time. It was a Chink. He went after me and flushed a Chink." Cherry craned his head to see across the crowd.

"There, ma'am!" he says, genial. "The boys is carryin' him out right now to compose him for the funeral. Reckon I'll have to shave up and git into the game."

"Aunt Delia begins to sob soft into her handkerchief.

"Oh," she cries out, "you hard, heartless, wicked, bad men! It's you and not my poor boy that's responsible for this day's deed."

"Cherry drew a fresh breath and begun again, gentle. He was always tender-hearted with women.

"You listen to me, ma'am, and don't you weep over a low-down, egg-headed, pig-tail heathen that aint a peer to me or you no more than is a jack-rabbit. Why, look here, ma'am, do you know how many billions of them sufferin' yellow devils prevailed over there accordin' to the last general election?"

"No," sighs Aunt Delia, "but I know they need missionaries. My son—"

"Your son aint got the latest figgers, I'll bet," cuts in Cherry, hasty. "But come inside, ma'am, out of this heat, and we'll look it up in the almanac." He passed me the high-sign and led her away.

"I turned back and found Ramon had grabbed Lee by the arm and was hissing into his ear. I made a lunge to collar Ramon, intending to shove him into the cooler on general principles, but he ducked under my arm, showed his yellow fangs in an ugly smile, and scuttled off. I forgot all about it at the time and

locked up Lee, warning him not to lay down on the cot, for its savage little population would sure git him if he didn't watch out. After that, I went home to square myself with Dulcie.

"Have you ever tried talking law and order, the higher abstractions of justice, or the knowledge of good and evil, to a set and determined woman? Maybe not, being single. For four hours at a stretch me and Dulcie had it out in the harness-room, while I explained high and low and back and forth why Lee must stand his trial. Over and over I dealt out the reasons, spreading them before her like a deck of cards, naming them off one by one. I had no case from the start. Dulcie sat still, plaiting her skirt, and smiling a pale little smile. She looked a dead ringer of the Angel. When I was all in and my voice gone, she slipped across to my knee.

"Jim," she says with a soft, trembly smile, "you're so funny! Anybody would believe the way you talk that you wanted to send Lee up! And all for a Chinaman that can't write his own name in English. Think what he'll come out! They say they give them opium up there as a reward of merit. Oh," she cries, her eyes streaming, "what kind of stuff are men made of!"

"She caught me round the neck. 'Let him off, Jim!' she begs. 'Don't break my heart. Let him off—send up Aunt Delia instead. Or else,' she whispers close in my ear, 'let me have the keys.'

"I give her one straight look, and left. Down stairs in the office I rummaged out a rusty old ball and chain that Tom Cronin had wore after he come in sun-crazed off the desert, thinking he was emperor of the air and all the hovering black buzzards, and lugged it down to the calaboose.

"Lee," I says, "I'm obliged to put this Oregon boot on you on account of Dulcie. She's set her heart on your escape. Stick out your foot, son."

"Lee uncrossed his legs. 'Help yourself,' he says sociable. 'How's Mother?'"

"I aint interviewed the lady none myself," I returns, gruff, "but when last seen she was down on her knees by the bed looking through the almanac for the last census report of China. Seems that

blasted old lunatic, Cherry, put a new bug into her head talking of all the Chinks dwelling in heathen darkness, and now she's aiming to send her dear son over there for to be a lamp-lighter.'

"Lee groaned and covered his face with his hands. He looked up a minute later. 'I warn you, Jim,' he remarks in a tight, strained voice, 'that I intend to escape. I've had enough. I'll go to South America, Patagonia, or some savage island of the sea—somewhere where there aint no mothers. And I'll start in fresh. You come one step nearer,' he warns with a red light in his eye, 'and I'll brain you with this confounded ball, and then elope with your gun.'

"All right,' I promises, sober. 'I'll keep my range.'

"That night sleep and me wasn't chums. Aunt Delia was at the bottom of all this mess, but figger as I would, I couldn't send her to jail. Along toward morning I drifted off, and was woke sudden by a noise. I jumped up, calling Dulcie, and made a grab for my pants—knowing all the time I'd been coppered. Dulcie and the keys were gone!

"Padding swift down stairs, I was halted by a streak of light from the kitchen door. On the table the lantern was smoking its head off. The next instant the outside door was broke open, and Dulcie stood on the threshold, laughing and panting like she'd been in a race. She'd slipped my old wolf-coat over her night-gown, and stuck her bare feet into moccasins.

"Oh, Jim, Jim!" she cries out joyous. 'He's out—he's vamoosed—he's gone! And all off his own bat—*solo*. Here's your keys. I didn't use them after all. When I got there the door was open. The bird had flown the coop.'

"Without a word, I turned my back on her and went upstairs on the dead jump. Inside the hour, with the stars paling out, I was loping the big roan toward the south. At the jail, where I pulled in a minute, I found the door lifted slap off its rusty hinges and the ground trampled by horses' feet. At that point, I recollected old One-Eye's secret palaver with Lee. The Greaser was evening up scores.

"I lit out for the desert on the gamble that Ramon wouldn't hole up in the

mountains, but make a bee-line for the border. That trip was a bunch of tough luck from the start. The first evening I discovered a leak in my canteen; in my rush I'd taken only one. The second day, Ramon, who never let a low-down chance slip, dealt me a card from the bottom of the pack. I found the next water-hole fouled. I pressed on some wary, looking all ways at once for a sand-storm or to be shot in the back by Ramon, for trouble mostly runs in bunches of threes, and I was still one black card shy.

"That afternoon I got it, ace-high. Loping out from a thicket of prickly pear, I made out what looked like two horsemen weaving along the rim of the plain. But I couldn't see clear on account of the heat-waves and the lightness in my head. It might be a couple of twisted pear-trunks, the bunch of fat leaves on top showing like men's sombreros. I watched for some time and then stuck spurs to the roan. It was just there Fate dealt me the card that made my lay-out complete.

"Before my horse had gone his length he broke through a badger-hole and came down full weight, snapping his right fore-leg and pinning me underneath. As a joker, my head hit a jagged chunk of lava that had been throwed up centuries ago just express to put me out of business.

"It was morning when I woke up, dreadful thirsty, shivering to the bone. First, I thought the blankets had slipped off the bed, but when I tried to roll over and unwrap my legs, I faded off the map. The sun was well up before I opened my eyes again and tried to figger out who and where I was. From the tail of one eye I could glimpse the withers of a big raw-boned roan, but that didn't give me no clue. Presently I sat up, planting my hands deep in the sand for support. The ground kicked up its heels and flew in big, dizzy black and red circles round and round my head. After a bit things sort of frizzed down. I can recollect watching the flies collect on the gray-veined belly of the roan, which had rolled clear of me.

"Somebody,' I says aloud, 'had ought to shoot that horse.'

"I staggered up to look for somebody to do it, and sat down sudden with a roaring in my ears. Three times I reeled up and fell down again, grinning away to myself like a sick hyena, before I abandoned the game.

" 'The jig's up, friend,' I apprises myself solemn. 'Your center of gravity's lost.' I begun to figger what to do, in that there event. 'If Mister Newton's

"I begun to trail myself slow along the ground, studying out what class of serpent I'd rather belong to. A water-snake looked pretty good to me but there wasn't no water to snake in. I give it up, and decided on one of them little thin desert side-winders. After I'd crawled a bit, though, I got mixed up on my species, and disremembered whether I was a side-winder or a stem-winder or



I began to trail myself slow along the ground.

apple hadn't fell down and been et up by the woman in the Garden, your gravity'd been all right now,' I mutters gloomy. 'But on account of that little deal, you're doomed to wiggle on your belly like a snake and sting the heels off that woman!' Even in my delirium I knew it was a woman at the bottom of all my trouble. I hoped she would cross my path.

an eight-day alarm. The sun was almighty hot on my bare head. I lay down with my face in the sand to work it out. By the loud ticking in my ears, I decided to cast my vote in favor of the time-piece and I was tickled as a goat to think I hadn't run down yet. Suddenly, behind my back I heard voices. I stopped ticking to listen.

" 'But, Señorito Angelo,' one voice

says, soft and pleading, 'so mos' fine chance for keel now, queek, in the back. Thees here knife—but no. Ah, *Dios*, Señor, I have heem—the gran' luluplan. Turn heem face up, the beeg, bold *hombre*. Then place his own gun to his hand and shoot. His *amigos* come, and sigh: 'Ah, the poor Señor Jeem! He go mad by a sun-strike and fire himself off. He sleep his cable and gone to hell of a sureness.'

"'You low-down black son of a buzzard!' growls another voice. 'I'll learn you—No, you don't: I'll keep that gun.' There was a scuffle, grunts, and then I heard the creaking of a saddle, hoofbeats, and a high, cackling laugh. '*Adios, Señorito mio!* You keep the gun—I keep the water. Veree mos' funnee—eh?'"

Wandless threw his cigar over the rail and spat after it.

"I don't recollect much of the return trip. Lee hauled me back into the shade of the pear thicket, and for hours he mauled and pried with Ramon's shooting-iron to get the boot off his foot. It was moon-rise before he finished the job and loaded me onto his pony. I reckon it was pure fool's luck that made us run into the drag-net of Cherry Kildare. Feeling some guilty over the Chink, he'd hustled over to the ranch of Laffin, who was sheriff, and the couple of them with some loose hands about the place hit the trail after us. I was in bed a week before my brain begun to sit up and take notice, and all that time Lee was held as a prisoner of war, while the sheriff and Cherry whispered apart, thick as horse-thieves, framing up a scheme to double-cross Aunt Delia. She walked among us pale as a ghost, and read over and over from scraps of paper she kept hid in her skirt-pocket. One day Cherry retrieved a fragment, and that afternoon him and Laffin went over the enemy's plan of fortification point by point. It was listed in the manner of a Chinese laundry bill. The items run like this:

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| "To cost per annum of maintain- | |
| ing one miss, in China..... | \$800 |
| "To average length of miss, life | |
| in China | 5 yrs. |
| "To sudden death by famine, fe- | |
| ver, wild snakes, etc..... | 70% |

"There was more like that, and underneath in a fine, elderly, shaky hand was wrote: 'Oh, Lord, have mercy on a weak old woman!'

"She's sure a jim-dandy little lady!" opines Cherry. 'She's aimin' for to see her Angel through the pen, and then give him the plenary third degree out in China. That there postscript is a sort of wireless Q. C. to her owners, meanin' breakers ahead. She's old and aint sure of her b'ilers. You got to jug the boy, Laffin, to save him from his too lovin' mother!"

"The sheriff made no remark. He was a heavy, untalkative man with a warm, speckled eye and a white scar across his chin. 'I got it,' he speaks up after a bit. 'Worked it out by higher mathematics.'

"'Trigger-nometry?' asks Cherry, winking at me. 'Or comic sections?'

"'You ramble in, Cherry,' orders Laffin, 'and escort the prisoner and Aunt Delia here.'

"They returned in a few minutes, Cherry and Dulcie in front and then Lee and Aunt Delia. I lay on a cot watching, and staked my chips on Aunt Delia.

"'Lee,' begins the sheriff, 'I reckon the time's ripe for me and you to have a little chat together. There's a rumor afloat that you shot a Chink, with intent to kill Cherry. Is that right?'

"Lee nods his head.

"That being the case, if there was no more addendums to add, I'd send you up to-day and start cutting fodder to-morrow. But there's circumstances touching on and appertaining to this here affair, more than meets the random eye. Cherry testifies that him and a certain nameless little high-binder lady give foul provocation of the deed. Dulcie calls my attention to the fact that if you took one life by mistake, you saved a better one on purpose. She wants me, as legal umpire of this game, to declare the score a tie. And that, I reckon, in fairness to all parties, I'd be bound to do—but we aint even pricked blood on this case yet! Madam,' he says grim, wheeling on Aunt Delia, 'yours is the master-hand in this here job—I'll make the deal with you. You let Lee off from preaching, and I'll let him off from the pen. I'd lose a thou-

sand dollars sooner than send that boy to the quarries. But you stick to your play, and I'll stick to mine. You make your son dance, and I'll make him dance and sing. I'll break him, I give you the oath of a Laffin, and hand him the ten-year limit. Now, ma'am—he settled back easy in his chair like he'd got the drop on his man—"it's all up to you."

"A sort of pale little willow-o'-the-wisp smile flickered over Aunt Delia's face. I doubled my bet right there.

"Mr. Laffin," she replies, soft and gentle, "I know I can trust you to do your duty like a Christian gentleman, and I hope you can likewise trust me the same. Of the law I know nothing, and must leave it in your strong hands. But concerning my son's spiritual future, I have struggled and wrestled long. Ever since Mr. Kildare told me of the millions of souls in China dwelling in darkness, my heart has been troubled. Day and night they cry out to me! And I thought of my son—"

"Laffin threw up his hand, 'Boys,' he says husky, 'she's called me. Cherry's right.' He leans forward eager. 'Ma'am,' he begs, 'give me just one more word before you close the deal. You let off Lee, and I'll stand them crying saffron devils a thousand bucks, and call it the white man's burden.'

"Aunt Delia shakes her head. 'You're very kind, but I couldn't see my way clear to do it.'

"Laffin's chin was sunk onto his breast, 'No,' he mutters gloomy, 'I didn't reckon you could.'

"I thought of Angel,' goes on Aunt Delia soft and steady, 'and it seemed right to send him over to fill that desperate need. And then—' She stopped, her lip trembling for the first time. 'And

then,' she falters, 'I discovered that I was a weak, miserable, selfish, sinful old woman that loved my son—and could not let him go!' She buried her face against Lee's shoulder. 'Poisonous mosquitoes,' she sobs out, 'and fevers and floods, nobody to turn down his sheets at night, and me millions of miles away!' She lifted her head. 'I couldn't do it. I'm a sinful, hard old woman; but I couldn't do it. Anything but that! I turned it over and over, and at last a way out came to me. It's a sacrifice, too, but not like the other. Angel and I must pay for a missionary to China between us. And that's why I can't take your money, Mr. Laffin. This substitute has got to be paid for by Angel and me alone or it wont seem right.' She turned to Lee. 'Do you realize what that means, my son? You'll have to give up the seminary—go to work. It'll take all our spare money to support the missionary. It's a terrible sacrifice, I know, dear. Can you make it?'

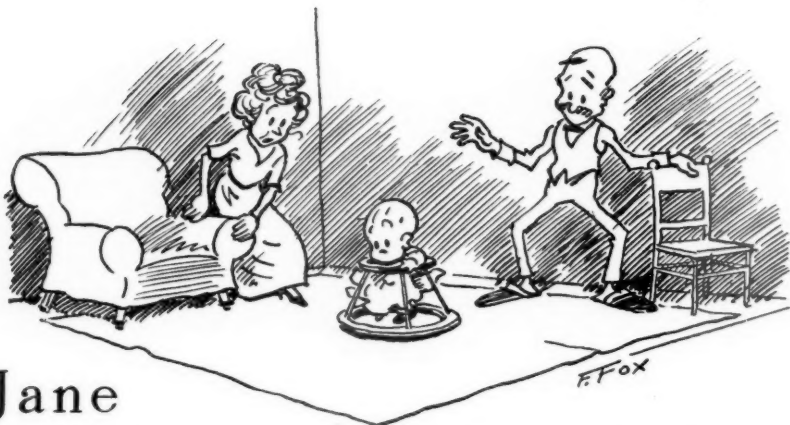
"She laid both hands on his shoulders, and looked up at him pale and solemn. Lee stared back at her, weak, dazed. He looked like a man broke by a long drunk. For a full year or so of time you could have heard a pin drop. Then Lee's face begun to work. He wet his lips. His mouth opened and shut like a dying fish's; he made little inaudible noises down his throat—but no word come. Aunt Delia spoke again, very soft and gentle.

"It's hard, I know, dear. Can you do it?'

"Lee's chest heaved in a big sigh.

"Oh, Mother, Mother!" he breathes out, and crumbled off in a dead faint.

"Cherry looks over to me, wiping his brow. 'My Gawd,' he says, low, 'what it is to be a woman!'



Jane the Second's Baby Walker

By Clinton York

Author of "Our Baby's Bath," etc.

Illustrated by F. Fox



IT is hard luck when a man has to admit to a watchful and critical world that he is the parent of a backward child. Such is the case, I regret to say, with the father of Jane the Second. Contrary to all traditions and precedents on both sides of our family, she celebrated her first birthday without being able either to walk or to talk.

Every one of her cousins and all our friends' children were able—according to the best memories of their parents—to carry on an interesting conversation by the time they were a year old. To our great embarrassment, Jane the Second still expresses herself in such childish syllables as "dadada" and "umum." For a child who is otherwise the brightest I ever saw, it is discouraging.

Both of my brother's children were playing ball or something by the time

they were eight months old, and Jane's sister up in Ware tells some remarkable stories of the prowess of her young son Robert—stories which it would be a trifle hard to believe if she were not Jane's sister and if she hadn't kept a baby book to prove many of her statements. Judging from the letters of Jane's other sister, who lives in Idaho, it will be necessary for me to borrow a couple of wildcats from the keeper of our park zoo when she brings her boy and girl East for a visit next summer, if they are going to be the least bit contented and not get homesick.

Poor Jane the Second, however, proved herself to be the misfit member of an unusual family. To be sure, she weighed a quarter of a pound more on her birthday than the twenty demanded by Dr. Holt of normal, average babies, and she beat the required six teeth by one and a half, but four ounces and a tooth and a half are not much to brag about in a family that turns out big leaguers and bronco busters. All of

her family grow enthusiastic when they see her, but they all say "Charming" and "How dainty!" Then they look pityingly at me and begin to tell what Peter and Bob and Marie did at such and such ages.

Jane's brother Jim is a bachelor and owns a jewelry concern in Buffalo. In business matters he is a cross between a whirlwind and the Connecticut Yankee whose folks got the patent on the wooden nutmegs. He "adopted" Jane the Second when she was three days old and since that time he has carried on an extensive advertising campaign in her behalf, despite her apparent unwillingness to furnish him with many talking-points. While he gave the rest of the nephews and nieces a hard contest for honors, I know it was a great disappointment to him when Jane the Second refused to walk prematurely, and I suspect that he too, in some way or other, held me responsible.

I have always admired Jim immensely, and I feel sure that he likes me personally. In fact he has loaned me money on several occasions. But notwithstanding any personal appeal I may have for him, I have always suspected that he had a secret notion that Jane the First might have done better. Of course, Jim has been extraordinarily successful.

On Jane the Second's first birthday, the expressman unloaded on our front porch a crated baby-walker with rubber tired casters and a full floating spring

seat. The letter from Uncle Jim, which accompanied it, expressed regret that no chauffeur or self-starter came with the "auto," but that it was her Uncle Jim's fond hope that Jane the Second would condescend to run it herself until she had acquired the more exciting use of her "pins." He also promised that unless he stepped on a banana peel, business would bring him East in a couple of months to see her.

I broke open the crate and we put Jane the Second into the walker, expecting her to sail about the house in great shape. Even Jane the First remembered that her sisters' children had shown some such ability. We backed away and got ready to move any furniture that might block the path. And nothing happened. Jane the Second gripped the sides firmly with her hands and stuck her feet straight out ahead of her and stayed right there.

"She's afraid," I suggested, making noises through my teeth that were intended to encourage her.

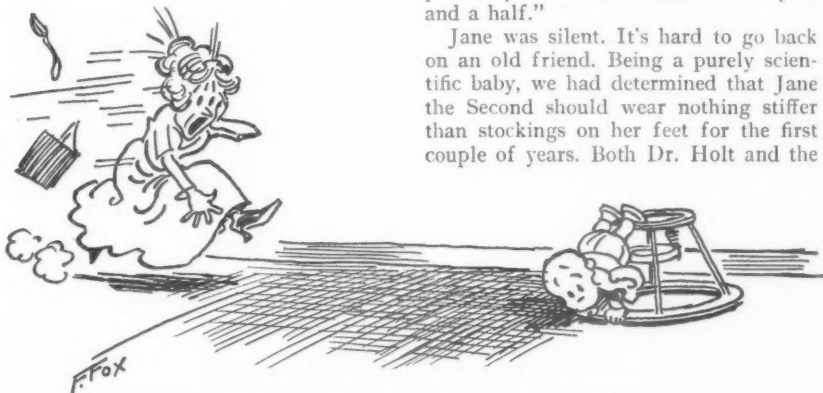
"She's not," said Jane. "She has inherited my instinctive fear of stepping on a tack or broken glass. I should hope that you wouldn't want her to go about in her stocking feet the way you do hunting for your slippers."

"What are you going to do then?" I asked. "Send back Jim's present?"

"Of course not. Jane the Second must have some shoes."

"But I thought you said that the Book positively forbade shoes for the first year and a half."

Jane was silent. It's hard to go back on an old friend. Being a purely scientific baby, we had determined that Jane the Second should wear nothing stiffer than stockings on her feet for the first couple of years. Both Dr. Holt and the



That dispelled all of Jane's former feeling of security

X-ray pictures of crooked feet, put out by the manufacturers of health footwear, had prejudiced us against shoes of any kind.

"I thought Jane the Second was to have the sort of feet the Greek sculptors used to rave over, and—"

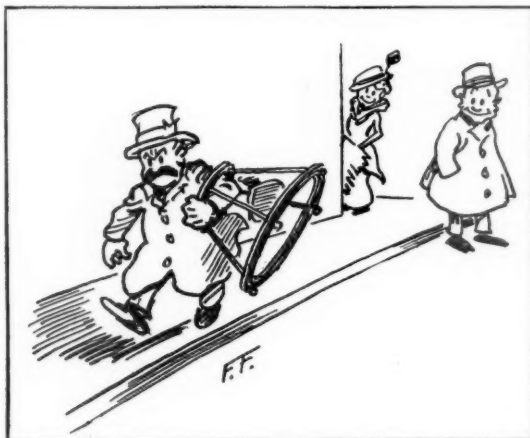
"Of course, William, if you don't appreciate Jim's present and don't care whether Jane the Second ever walks or not, very well. Only yesterday Mrs. Bordman stopped us when I had Jane the Second out and asked whether the dainty little Jane walked yet."

"Where do you get them?" I asked, fully convinced.

"You can't expect Dr. Holt to foresee all circumstances," Jane assured me apologetically. "We've got to use some judgment of our own in certain cases. Stop at Fenton's and have them order a pair of soft-soled moccasins exactly like the ones they order for Mrs. Dr. Payton Price. Her husband is a chiropodist, and she ought to know. She told Mrs. Bosworth that she always got her shoes at Fenton's."

With Jane the Second's birthday coming on the Saturday before Labor Day, we couldn't hope to get the shoes until the following Tuesday, so there was nothing to do but to delay Jane the Second's education, and store the baby-walker under the billiard table where it would be out of the way.

On Sunday we took a picture of Jane the Second in her walker, so that she might show her Uncle Jim how much she appreciated his present. It looked at first as if it would be a study in still life. She wasn't any keener about traveling around in her walker than she was the day before. We were sorry for Jim, for we knew how disappointed he would be. I managed to get one picture of her when she was swinging her feet, but I must have held the camera a little too close to her, for the picture turned out to be a trifle out of focus. It didn't hurt



I carried the whole thing down to a cabinet maker.

it a bit. The blurred feet and a general haziness gave about the same results you see in the newspaper pictures of the Vanderbilt Cup Race. In that picture, Jane the Second couldn't have been going less than fifty-five miles an hour.

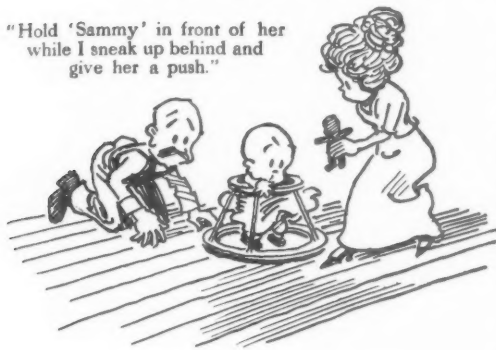
Uncle Jim was tremendously pleased with the picture and dictated a letter to Jane the Second saying that banana or no banana, he was going to spend the first Sunday in November with her and the walker.

The shoes didn't do a particle of good. Jane the Second simply refused to move the walker. But it came in mighty handy as an anchor. Jane remembered how safe all her nephews and nieces had been in their walkers, and for the first time she felt that she could safely leave Jane the Second alone for a few minutes while she went about her work, and be fairly certain of finding her "put" when she got through. It must not be understood from anything I have already said that Jane the Second is entirely passive.

For two weeks she spent at least an hour a day bouncing up and down on the spring seat of the otherwise stationary baby-walker. As long as her brother had the picture, Jane recklessly disregarded the future and never regretted the lack of chauffeur or self-starter.

"But what will Jim say when he comes," I reminded her, "and finds us

"Hold 'Sammy' in front of her while I sneak up behind and give her a push."



using the walker for a hitching post? The first of November will be here before you know it."

"Now, Will," Jane expostulated, "it won't do any good to fuss about it. When Jane the Second gets accustomed to the walker, she'll use it all right. One of these days she'll—"

"Yes, and one of these days will be the first Sunday in November." Jane's nonchalance got on my nerves. "I shouldn't care if I hadn't been the one who took the picture and sent it to Jim."

A few mornings later, while Jane was washing the breakfast dishes, she heard appealing squeaks from the dining room and got there in time to find Jane the Second hanging over the side by her toes and preparing to walk around the ring of the walker on her hands. That dispelled all of Jane's former feelings of security.

It was evident that my daughter was taking after me and growing rapidly taller from the waist down. I tried to raise the seat by shortening the straps, but she could still reach the floor and push herself out. I decided that longer legs would have to be put in the walker, and carried the whole thing down to a puttery friend of mine who calls himself a cabinet maker.

After stopping at his "studio" every other day for three weeks, and listening to all sorts of good reasons why the walker wasn't finished, I got it—with a bill for two dollars. Four spindles at ten cents a piece ought to have figured up to about forty cents, and when I made a polite complaint my friend ex-

plained to me that he had noticed from the name-plate under the seat that it was an imported walker, and that it grated on his idea of the fitness of things to use anything less than South American mahogany in the legs. He had had to send to New York for it too. He felt so sure that I would appreciate his feelings in the matter that I paid the two dollars.

Almost a month's absence and the mahogany legs made the walker look like a total stranger to Jane the Second, and she treated it just that way. At the same time a letter from Uncle Jim notified Jane to expect him in exactly eight days.

From that minute, Jane the Second's carefully worked-out schedule of living was thrown to the winds. Her breakfast, breakfast-nap, bath, bath-nap, orange juice, play-time, coddled egg, constitutional, olive oil rub, bottle, sleep, more bottle, sleep, and start all over again, were sandwiched in haphazard between try walker, practice walker, please walker, walker, and *W!lk!* We had eight days to make that Vanderbilt Cup picture real! I noticed that Jane wasn't quite so nonchalant, either.

We cleared all the boxes out of the attic and gave a lot of things we couldn't afford to lose to the Salvation Army just to make room for Jane the Second's lessons. The attic made a splendid place for practice, but the floor was so smooth that Jane the Second's feet slipped out from under her every time she evinced the slightest willingness to try to walk. I had thin rubber calks, like those the turkey-trotters are using, cemented on the bottoms of her dollar-and-a-quarter chiropodist moccasins, but Jane the Second continued to stick her feet out ahead of her and wait for us to push her around.

By the third day we were all beginning to get discouraged.

"What *will* Jim say?" This, after a good hour of coaxing and pushing the walker about the attic floor.

"Don't fuss, Jane," I advised, quoting. "Hold Sammy out in front of her while I sneak up behind and give her a

push. Maybe she'll think she did it herself and will try again." So while Jane alluringly held up the rubber doll, Sammy, I gave the walker a little push. Jane the Second made a lunge for Sammy, and that, coupled with the push, gave the walker a greater momentum than I had intended, and the ring around the bottom struck Jane in the ankles. Jane stood first on one foot and then on the other and was just losing her temper when I called her attention to the fact that Jane the Second was doing her best to clear the road by vigorously squeezing Sammy, who was sending out shrill warning noises through the little tin whistle in his back.

"The next time, Will, you hold Sammy."

Jane worked on her every afternoon, and I took a turn mornings and evenings. To increase the excitement, another tooth began to show up, and between that and her disrupted schedule, our daughter wasn't exactly her old sweet self by the time Uncle Jim was due to arrive.

I strongly advised treating it as a good joke and laughing it off, but Jane knew Jim and favored putting Jane the Sec-



I was not breaking the Sabbath.

ond to bed and claiming that it was something serious. The walker showed sufficient signs of wear to convince him of its daily use, but Jane the Second's general activity and generous appetite were drawbacks to Jane's plan.

Then came a respite right out of heaven. Business made it necessary for Jim to put off his trip for another week.

Jane and I and Jane the Second and the walker went wearily back to the attic. By Thursday of that blessed extra week, Jane the Second began to show symptoms of a glimmering understanding that the thing we wanted her to do was to move that walker herself. As I have said many times, Jane the Second is no fool, and by Saturday she could propel that walker around the attic until the sparks flew.

Jane never said a word, but she served up a supper that night that was just one inch short of a regular Thanksgiving Day dinner.

We were so unduly excited the next morning that we got up a half hour earlier than Jane the Second usually demanded, and planned to greet Jim with a waffle breakfast before ascending to the parade grounds up under the roof for an exhibition of his niece's athletic attainments. Jane had just decided which one of Jane the Second's dresses best fitted the occasion when a messenger boy brought a night letter:



To increase the excitement another tooth began to show up.

Plans changed. Start St. Louis

this noon. Can have one hour with you between trains. Bring Jane the Second and eat with me at the Limbeck. Eleven o'clock.

JIM.

"Well, the idea!" said Jane. "Not after we have bought a dollar-and-eighty-five-cent steak and mushrooms. You get ready and meet him at the train and bring him up here. Besides, what about Jane the Second's walker?"

Jim was disappointed when he stepped off the Pullman and saw me at the station all alone, but when I gave him Jane's message he pushed me into a taxicab and jumped in after me.

Jane was putting the steak on the broiler as we came around the corner into our street on two wheels, and by the time Jim had kissed everybody and was holding Jane the Second, I had his piece of steak all carved and buried in mushrooms. We were just reaching the second helping when Jim looked at his watch and jumped up.

"Time's up, boys and girls. I've got twenty minutes to make that train."

Jane gave me a nod and grabbed Jane the Second

"Help Jim with his overcoat and then bring him up to the attic," Jane called back from half way up the stairs.

When Jim and I reached the top of the stairs, Jane the First was on her knees behind the baby-walker holding it back by main strength, while Jane the Second was digging her toes into the floor and growing red in the face in an effort to get under way. It looked like the start of an aeroplane flight. It was a proud moment after those last two weeks.

"Stop, Jane," cried Jim with the same tone he used when he ordered the taxicab driver to hustle.

He grabbed Jane the Second out of the walker and held her protectingly to his breast.

"Don't ever put her into that thing again," he ordered. "If I had forgotten about that, I should never have forgiven myself. Give that walker to the heathen or sell it, but don't ever let Jane the Second get into it again. A woman with six children got on at Utica and had the section back of mine. When her oldest boy dropped a sticky dime down my neck and wouldn't take another in its place because 'Gammer' had given it to him, I introduced myself. She had evidently had a good deal of experience too, and when I showed her the picture of Jane the Second in the walker she nearly had a fit. She said it gave them crooked knees."

"But Jim, certainly just this once won't hurt her and we want to show—"

"Good-by, people. Burn it, if you are worried about the heathen, but keep Jane the Second out of it."

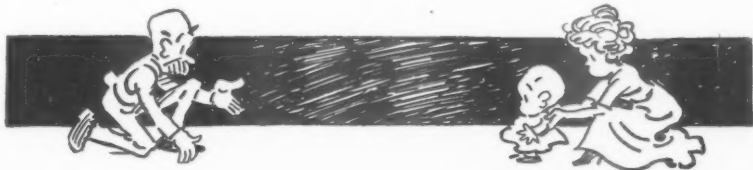
"Of course, Jim," I said, "if you think it will do her any harm we won't use it, but it seems too bad to waste it after all the fun we've had teaching Jane the Second to use it. If you'd wait—"

Jim was on his way down the stairs with Jane the Second bobbing and smiling up at us over his shoulder as we meekly followed them.

"And we *do* so want her to learn to walk," said Jane reproachfully.

"Can't help it, Jane. No crooked knees for ours. And that woman had had lots of experience."

Four minutes later, when Jim was swinging onto the last coach of the St. Louis train as it pulled out of the station a good mile and a quarter from our house, a Puritanical person might have suspected from the noise in our cellar that I was breaking the Sabbath. He would have been wrong. It was the walker. What right have we citizens of an enlightened land to inflict crooked knees on the poor helpless heathen?





Fate *and* Tom Loftus

A STORY OF A
SAILORMAN AND HIS WIFE

By Frederick R. Bechdolt

Author of "Lighthouse Tom," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY DOUGLAS DUER

A PROPOS of the last prisoner, who had departed jailward calling on high heaven to witness that Fate had selected him for a victim, Mackenzie, the desk sergeant, spoke to the wagon man.

"What does a landsman like him know about such things as Fate?" he demanded. "Now, if he'd been to sea, Sammy—"

The Harbor Police Station was deserted save by these two; and the wagon man knew what was bothering Mackenzie. Sam's methods were direct; neither subtleties nor politeness entered among them; and he wanted to hear the story. He interrupted his grizzled companion.

"Aw, cut it," he said. "Give me the yarn."

Mackenzie nodded, smiling under his heavy gray mustache.

"There was Tom Loftus," he resumed imperturbably. "*He* could've yelled his head off about this Fate stuff. But he did not. He was a stubborn man. Tom Loftus, the mate of a scalin' schooner when he died the first time."

"When he died the first time!" Sam exclaimed.

The old desk sergeant's face remained placid. "There was three times—in a

manner o' speakin'," he explained, "and all along of that stubbornness. It was like this:

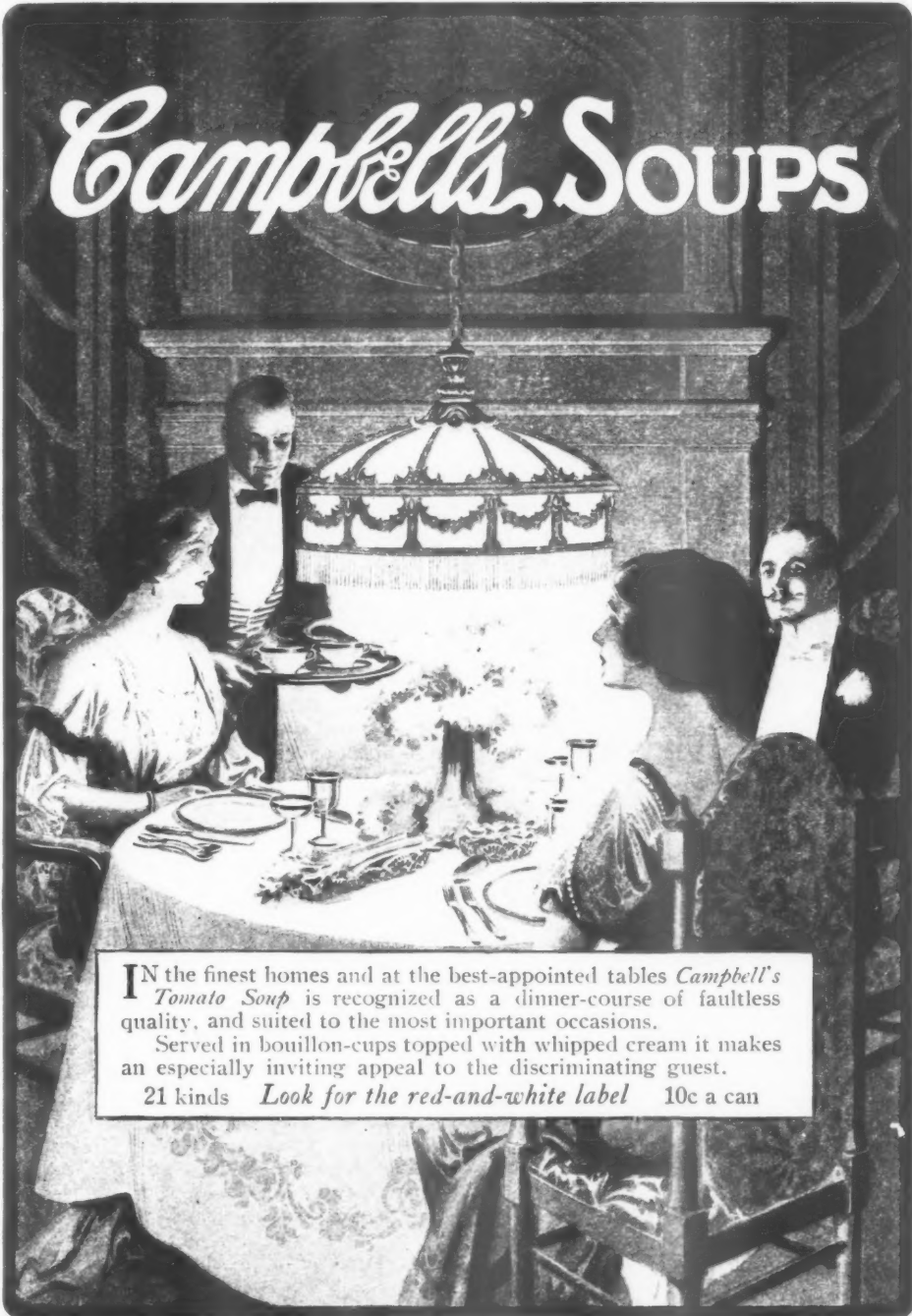
"Tom Loftus loved salt water; ever since he had been a boy the sea had brung his bread and butter; and its ways was his ways. But his girl had not that same likin'. She was afraid the sea was goin' to get him, and she was forever arguin' with him to nail a job ashore.

"Mary Lewis was her name, a little slip of a lass; ye could hold her out in one hand. She had big blue eyes; and it seemed like they always had a scared look in them when Tom was away on a cruise.

"But Tom was not afraid of the sea or anything else gettin' him. He had that stubbornness that made his boldness big. So, when Mary would be beggin' him to stay on land, he would laugh at her and mebbe pinch her cheek; and that was the best satisfaction she could get from him.

"Then, one day after he had been courtin' her for three years, them two set the time for their weddin'. It was to come off when he landed from the next cruise. He got her the ring, and they set up late the night before he sailed.

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"It was hard for Mary to say good-by to him that night,—so hard that she cried on his shoulder, then let him go, then called him back—and all that sort o' thing. She had it on her mind that this would be the last time she was ever goin' to see him. Some sort of hunch like women get.

"But that kind o' thing was not botherin' Tom. He felt sorry for her; but he went on board the schooner whistlin', because he was glad to go to sea and because he was glad over what was waitin' for him when he come back again. So he changed his clothes down in the cabin and come on deck; and before the tug had got them out to the Heads he had licked two o' the fo'c'stle hands and showed the crew who was boss. Them was rough days, Sammy.

"Well, while he was enjoyin' himself skinnin' up his knuckles, Mary was settin' alone at home beginnin' her waitin'. It was a long day for her. And the other days was long. They went on by, and the weeks went by growin' into months. And there was no letters; for what ports the schooner touched at was away out o' the world, as ye might say. So she waited, with her eyes getting bigger and more afraid. I have an idea that her job was the hardest of the two, for all that sealin' was no boy's play.

"At last the time had gone by; and the schooner was due again in San Francisco Harbor. And Mary Lewis begun to learn how long a day can be. For that hunch of hers that Tom was not goin' to come back had stayed with her every hour while she was awake; and at night she had dreamed of him bein' dead.

"The sealin' fleet come home, one after the other. And not one of them had a word of Tom Loftus' schooner for months back. There was no wireless then; ye got reports from vessels sightin' vessels and that was all. There had been several ugly blows that season.

"So Mary Lewis watched the papers and visited the docks; and kept on gettin' whiter and thinner in the face until her eyes were pitiful to look at. And still no word. The months went on.

"Then, one day, there come a little item in the papers sayin' that the Indians on the west coast o' Vancouver

Island had picked up wreckage from that schooner. Ye mind readin' o' that coast, Sammy? A ships' graveyard. The set o' the currents makes it catch everything afloat in that part o' the Pacific. No white men live there—only a few scattered Siwashes. They comb the beach for wreckage; and when some lighthouse tender or revenue cutter cruises out that way, it is pretty sure to get news that will set owners to figgerin' out their losses and women to buyin' black dress goods.

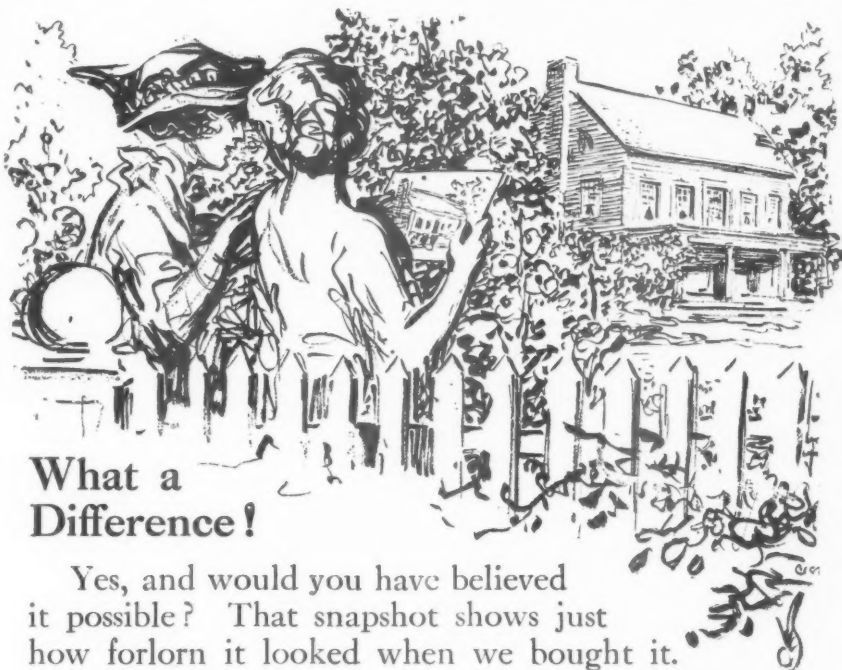
"So Mary Lewis, she read this item in the papers, and she began mournin' for the man that had been lost to her. She took it very quiet; but she had been lookin' for it, ye see, believin' it was going to come. And surprise is the worst o' having people die on ye. She met me on the street one day and told me all about it; for I knew her well. I would've give her comfort if I had known how. But what is there to say to a woman when her man has died at sea? I left her, and the sight of her face would come in front of me every once in a while—the whiteness and the thinness and the look in her big eyes.

"It was about a month after that when I was walkin' down the docks; and I seen a schooner that had just tied up. As I was lookin' at her, a man come ashore. I stopped and looked sharper; he seemed familiar like. It was Tom Loftus.

"He was glad to set his eyes on me. But he had not much more than said 'Hello,' before he was askin' after Mary. I told him how she had took the news of his ship bein' lost with all hands.

"'I was afraid o' that,' says he; 'I knew it would go hard with her.'

"While we was headin' for a car to take him out to her house, he told me the story—what there was to tell of it. It seems like they was homeward bound and everything was goin' lovely. Plenty o' skins in the hold, and a good fat lay for all hands. Fine weather, after they had gone through several heavy blows. Tom was standin' on the quarterdeck one clear evenin' lookin' at the stars and thinkin' how mebbe Mary would be lookin' at the same ones—like a man



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will when his girl is waitin' for him to come and marry her. The man at the wheel was tendin' to his business, and nothin' to bother anybody, and then—

"All of a sudden, Tom says it was, and right in the open sea with the man on look-out seein' no sign of anything—a smash that threw Tom face down on the deck. The schooner shivered like she was sick.

"By the time Tom had picked himself up and yelled, 'All Hands'—and before more than three or four had reached the deck, she was sinkin'. Seems like she had opened right up like a basket. Water comin' in, in rivers. Whatever she had struck—or mebbe it had struck her, nobody knows—had split things all to hell below the waterline.

"Well, there was a lively mess tryin' to find out how bad a way they was in, and before any one had learned anything the vessel was settling down to make her big dive under. They tried to launch boats. They got one over, and then the schooner made a rush for the bottom.

"Tom was standin' near the rail, and he made a leap overside tryin' to get as far clear of her as he could. At that she sucked him down; and when he come up he heard somebody yellin'; then everything become quiet. He was pretty nigh dead from bein' under so long, but he made out to swim over to some wreckage. Then he was alone on the ocean.

"The boat they had launched had gone down with the schooner; and only for him, the whole ship's company was lost.

"So Tom hung onto his wreckage and done the best he could by himself—which was little enough. Case o' keep afloat and wish, while the water washes over ye and the cold chews into your bones.

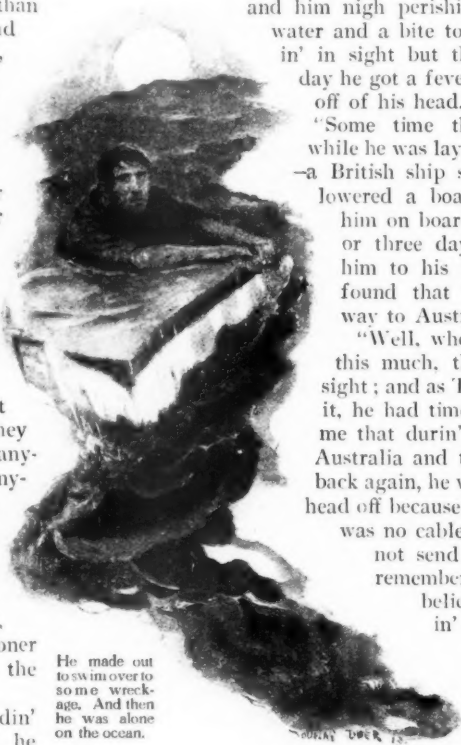
"But next mornin' the sun come out and warmed him. And before noon, he wished he had the cold. For there was no drink and his mouth was parchin'. That day seemed a month long to Tom Loftus. Night again and the cold; another day and him nigh perishin' for a sup o' water and a bite to eat. And nothin' in sight but the swells. That day he got a fever like, and went off of his head.

"Some time the next day—while he was layin' like one dead—a British ship sighted him and lowered a boat. They carried him on board and after two or three days they brought him to his right mind. He found that he was on his way to Australia.

"Well, when he'd told me this much, the car come in sight; and as Tom was catchin' it, he had time enough to tell me that durin' that voyage to Australia and the long voyage back again, he was worryin' his head off because of Mary. There was no cable then; he could not send a message. He remembered how she had believed he was goin' to die; and now she would think he was lost with the schooner.

"Next time I seen Tom was at the weddin'; and Mary was lookin' better already. But it takes more to keep two than it does to keep one, and within a week them two was at the old argument. He was set on goin' to sea right off; and she was tryin' to persuade him to stay ashore and get some job.

"The sea will get ye, Tom,' she says; 'I know it will. Take warnin' from escapin' once. Ye are temptin' Fate.' And she kept tellin' him that over and over,



He made out to swim over to some wreckage. And then he was alone on the ocean.

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"Temptin' Fate," she handed it to him day and night.

"Fate!" says he. "What do I care for Fate? That is woman's talk. Fate!" And he laughed at her.

"So he got another job and he sailed away into the north again. And the last night, when them two should've been as happy as they could, she spent the most o' the time cryin', as if he was dead already. It had got to her—the way that schooner had gone under after her hunch; and she was sure it had been a warnin'. But what good are a woman's words when a man is set? And Tom was one to have his way anyhow. So they said their good-by, and she began her job of waitin' once more.

"It was the schooner *Norah Jensen* that Tom was mate on—in the fishin' fleet. Ye mind the *Norah Jensen*, Sammy?"

The wagon man shook his head.

"True," Mackenzie nodded. "It was years ago. Ye would not 've noticed it if ye had read it then, bein' only a lad. Well, well! Once in a while it comes to me that I am gettin' old.

"It was this way, then, with the *Norah Jensen*, while Mary was waitin' at home, hopin' for word that her man had come to port and fearin' of word that his ship was lost with all hands:

"The schooner was to bring her catch to Puget Sound; and Tom was to wire Mary the minute he set his foot ashore in Seattle. And the days had dragged along, and the weeks had gone on, until that time was come. And the *Norah Jensen* was sailin' before a fair wind up the Straits o' Juan de Fuca. She was a little schooner and she come in under her own canvas.

"Now the cruise was as good as over; and Tom looked at the blue mountains and the green woods, and laughed because he would see his wife so soon. Then, along in the tail o' the afternoon, all of a sudden and without any sign, the breeze died. The schooner laid becalmed. And, while she laid there, as the sun went down, there come a fog, as sudden as the dyin' o' the wind. It was not natural.

"But Tom was feelin' good because the Sound laid right ahead o' them—

and port seemed almost before the schooner's bows. And if anybody had told him then about Fate, remindin' him of what Mary had said to him, he would 've given them the laugh. So the fog thickened and they could not see anything but a strip of gray water; and that went out o' sight with the night.

"And then it come again—a ship's lights right on top o' them! A whistle through the fog—a big black hull smashin' down and on and into the *Norah Jensen*, chawin' her timbers into splinters, cuttin' her fair in halves.

"Tom Loftus found himself in the water that was boilin' and churnin' from the steamship's screws; and the wreckage was battin' him on one side, then the other, as he made the fight to keep his head above. And the water quieted down. And the lights of the steamship went right on. And some one yelled, just like they had that other time. And then there was no sound.

"Now Tom had looked for the steamship to lay to and pick up them that had not drowned. He had managed to get his hands on something afloat; and he found it was a dory they had trailed along astern by the painter. He crawled into that; and then he seen how the steamship had gone right on. He hollered for some sign of his shipmates. No answer come. He was alone.

"And when he looked for oars, he found that there was none. What was more, the dory had been stove up considerable and she was leakin' quite a bit. By some queer good luck, Tom had on a soft felt hat jammed down upon his head. It had stuck there while he was in the water. He pulled it off now and he used it to bail. And that way he kept afloat.

"Well, the fog lasted all that night and Tom could not see where he was. But he knew the tide was racing to the sea, and before mornin' come he felt the big swells heavin' under him. And all he could do was bail with his hat, and hope that somebody would see him with daylight.

"I will not spin it out too long, Sammy. The dory was carried out to sea, and sometime before noon the next day a vessel sighted him and picked him up.

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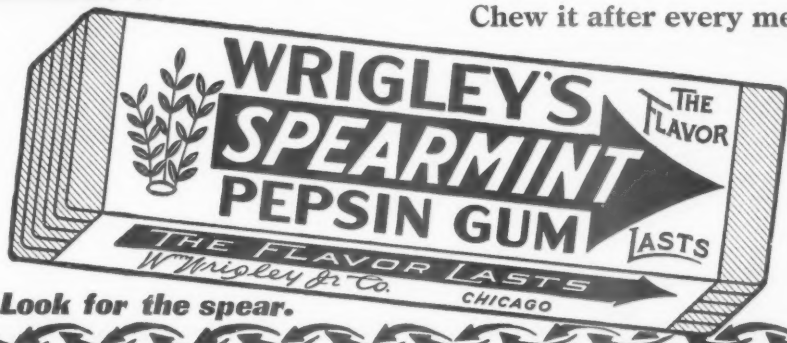
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A steamship from Seattle to Vladivostok. And, though there was usually other shippin' in sight hereabouts, there was nothing that showed this day. So Tom must go across the Pacific and back again in a slow, pot-bellied tramp.

"It was along in October when the *Norah Jensen* had gone to the bottom with all hands but him. And down in San Francisco Mary waited and watched until she got the news again of wreckage. And this time she was sure her man was gone. For the wreckage was picked up near Victoria and if anybody was saved he would 've been sure to get to some port—so everyone believed.

"So Mary put on mournin' for her husband and wished that they could 've found his body for her to bury, anyhow. And that was in the month of November.

"It was along about Christmas week when Tom landed on the San Francisco docks from the tramp. And he made a straight line for his house. He found his wife all dressed in black, and gaunted so that he hardly knew her. And she could not believe at first that it was him in the flesh.

"Then when she seen that it was Tom himself and not his ghost, she begun to cry. For she was weak with what she had been through. After a while she got to feelin' good again; and they had their little time of happiness.

"And now," says she, 'ye see I was right, Tom. It is Fate.'

"He would not listen to that and he only laughed at her, but it was the laughin' of a stubborn man, and not because he really felt that way. Fact is, Tom Loftus was wonderin' a little about things himself. His hide was thick; but he had sailed nigh to Death, and he did not exactly understand. Many a time before, he had run chances, the same as any other sailorman; but these two times, comin' out of a clear sky, was different.

"Queer talks them two had together while he was ashore; they both told me their sides of it. Mary was dinnin' at him harder than ever.

"Two times," says she. 'And only a miracle has kept ye alive for me.'

"Two times," says he. 'And there'll

be no more. That's all there is to it. Leave me be. A man has got to work.'

"And so he went to sea again, and was mad at himself for havin' listened to her, for it had kept him thinkin' about things that he could not understand. This time it was with a small coastwise steam schooner. And he would not be long away from home—matter of a month.

"Now, Sammy, here comes the curious part o' this here yarn. That steam schooner had been gone for three weeks or so, and the time was comin' when Mary was to see her man again. Then something got into her head. Ask me why, and I'll not tell ye; for I do not know and I do not think she knew herself. But she made up her mind one day that she could not wait any longer in San Francisco.

"Ye see, it was like this: the *Robert Isaacs*—that was the name o' the craft—was comin' down from Puget Sound. And she was to put in at Eureka and take on more cargo.

"And Mary—instead o' bein' content to bide in San Francisco for the extra week or so—took that sudden notion that she must go up to Eureka and meet him half way.

"I just had to," she told me; and that was all she would say. I have my own ideas about it; but them ideas is sort o' superstitious like. And anyhow, whatever her reason was, she up and took passage for that port. And this is what happened after she got there.

"The *Robert Isaacs* was due in Eureka Harbor, as nearly as could be figured, along in the mornin'. That harbor, Sammy, has a bad bar. And when the mornin' come, Mary went on out to the heads. She aimed to watch the steam schooner come in. She said she could not stay in the town.

"She went out to the heads when it was early. She had a pair o' glasses and she watched the sea. The mornin' was gray and windy. Before night it looked like there would be thick weather—and vessels layin' bar-bound. So Mary kept them glasses to her eyes.

"Well, the wind was risin'; but some time before noon she seen the *Robert Isaacs* comin' down ahead o' the storm.



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She got sight o' the two masts, and then the hull; and back beyond, the sea was all murky. She looked at the bar, and she seen the line o' white growin' longer where the seas was breakin'; and right through that white line, the gray black o' the north channel, where the *Robert Isaacs* must come in.

"It was like watchin' a race; for if the seas got much heavier they would be breakin' clean acrost the bar, and no vessel could come through. But while she watched she seen that the *Robert Isaacs* was gettin' some the best of it, and had time to spare.

"The steam schooner got bigger and plainer until Mary could see the men upon the bridge. The *Robert Isaacs* was headin' for the north channel. That channel showed clear from where Mary stood, the gray-black patch that cut through the long white line of breakin' seas—the deeper water.

"That little steam schooner was pitchin' good and lively. The wind and rain was gainin' on her. But she had fair lead on the storm. She was sure to make it now before the bar began to break clean acrost. And then—

"Something went wrong. Mary could see it from the shore two miles away. The vessel was not comin' right in any more; she was not ridin' them heavy swells. She had sort of hesitated like; and now she was rollin' terrible, layin' in the trough. She was comin' along, skidding sideways towards the white breakers—less than a quarter of a mile from where she wallowed.

"It was like the poor *Robert Isaacs*

was some animal struck alongside of the head, and could not handle herself.

"Ye understand, Sammy, that is the way Mary seen it. What had happened was that the steerin' gear had gone wrong. No man on board knew why or what had done it. It had come all sudden like. And there was no time to mend the trouble in that narrow place—no chance to get back into the clear.

"Then, within fifteen minutes, the wind jumped down on top of that craft and the seas piled up over her—as if all things was workin' together. The wind and the seas! And the *Robert Isaacs* adrift in the north channel—with Mary watchin' from two miles away.

"Well, the wind had not much more than risen before Mary seen her go aground. The little old steam schooner took an awful list, leanin' way over like she was very tired. Then a sea washed over her decks and hid everything but her mast-heads. She rose up just once; then she struck again and the water buried her once more.

"The wind howled, and out there the seas grew higher; and the bar was breakin' all the way acrost. The air was gray with drivin' rain and spray. Through that gray, Mary seen a tug-boat comin' out from the

harbor, comin' slowly, fightin' foot by foot against the storm.

"There was a lull. The *Robert Isaacs* showed where she laid hard and fast aground. Then two or three big seas come racin' one after the other to jump on top of her. And everything was water. The rain growed thicker; for a





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long time Mary could see nothin' but heavy gray sheets that parted sometimes for a minute or two and showed a line of white surf. That was all. Even the tug-boat batterin' its way into them big seas was out of sight for long spells.

"This way the afternoon went on. Once or twice Mary got a glimpse through the glasses of the steam schooner's two masts stickin' up through the line o' breakers. Once or twice she seen the tug-boat makin' a rush to try and get a line on board, or standin' by, waitin' for another chance.

"But along about five o'clock Mary got a bit o' hope. There come a few minutes when the rain thinned and the wind seemed to sort of rest. She was able to take a longer look at them two masts out there in the whirl o' bustin' seas. On one o' them—up at the very head—there was a bunch. She looked closer. It was a man. He had lashed himself fast.

"She wondered if that man would be Tom.

"Well, Sammy, that woman stayed out there all night. The news had got back to town and in the afternoon there was quite a crowd had come to the heads to rubber. They watched her, standin' off by herself, with the glasses always to her eyes. A picture she must 've made, lookin' into the storm! Until darkness come she never took them binoculars down nor rested. She never felt the rain nor the cold. But she waited on. And the night went by, with her alone. Once or twice she could get a glimpse o' the tug-boat's lights tossin' around on the crests o' the swells; but that was all.

"When mornin' come, it was a long time before she could make out any sign o' the wreck—a long time, and she was afraid it had broken up. But when it grew lighter, she seen them two masts still stickin' above the smother; and on one o' them was that man, lashed fast.

"She prayed that it would be Tom, and that life would be in him. But she was full o' fear.

"The tug-boat was still there; and now the storm began to ease off a little bit and the tug was able to creep out into the channel, foot by foot, right among them breakin' swells. Mary watched it

rise, then sink out o' sight, then rise again, then sink and stay until it seemed like it must 've gone for good, and so on. She forgot that she was wet to the skin and cold to the bones. She forgot everything except that man out there lashed to that mast, with the sea a-roarin' about him and a-tryin' to tear him loose from his perch. The crowd had come from town again. They seen her standin' in the same place as she had stood the day before, with the glasses still to her eyes—as if she had not even moved her arm—seein' nothin' but what them glasses showed.

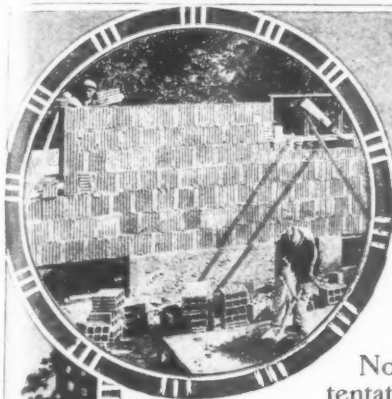
"Little enough that was to see—a speck above the swells, then only water again, a smudge o' smoke driftin' through the rain, then water again, a mast stickin' up through the breakers, a bunch on the mast.

"So she waited. The tug-boat sneaked up closer yet. Now—at last—when it was near enough to heave a line to the man in the riggin', Mary seen an awful sea comin' on. It ran in; it fell down on the wreck and smothered it; it buried everything. When it had passed, the *Robert Isaacs* was gone. No sign of mast or man!

"Then Mary seen how she had watched the sea get Tom. For she was sure it was her man up there on the mast. She started back to the town, so that she could hear the men on the tug-boat tell her how he had died before their eyes. She'd stuck to the last hope and that was gone. And now she walked along like some person a-dreamin'.

"The tug-boat was slow in gettin' in. And when she did tie up at the wharf, Mary was the first person on board of her. And when she set her foot on deck and told them who she was, and why she had come, instead o' lookin' at her with pity, they grabbed her by the hand and took her into the cabin. And there laid Tom.

"Like one dead he lay, but the breath was in his body yet. And they said he had been that way in that same place for pretty nigh twenty-four hours. For it was not him at all Mary had been watchin' lashed to the mast-head; that man was some one else. Tom had washed overboard with one o' them first seas;



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and when the tugboat was comin' out she had picked him up, seemin' like a floatin' corpse—the only one alive off o' the *Robert Isaacs*.

"The sea had took him again and, after Mary had mourned for him, had give him back to her.

"She sat beside him while they worked over him. And it was a slow job. But she stuck and she watched his eyes. So, when at last he did open them, Tom Loftus looked at his wife.

"He was not able to do much talking until along in the night; and the doctor that they had got for him said it was only because he was too tough to kill at all, that he was able to talk then.

"Then first words he spoke, he said to Mary. 'Never again,' says he, and then he had to stop. And when he was able to speak once more, 'I do not understand,' he says.

"And that was the manner of his promisin' Mary what she had asked for so often, Sammy. After he got some

strength, he talked to her like a man that has got the worst of it and does not know why. He seemed puzzled like, and he kept sayin', 'I do not understand.'

"But Mary never had to ask him what he meant by them first words he had spoke to her; for he said them many times that night, 'Never again!'

"Well, Sammy, he got a good job ashore, and I seen him often, and we talked the whole thing over more than once. I mind one day, he says to me:

" 'Women are queer with them ways o' theirs. Now what made Mary come up there to Eureka Bar? And Fate?' He give me a long, hard look. 'Do ye believe in them ideas?' he says.

" 'Do ye?' says I.

" 'I do not know,' he says. 'But sometimes it seems to me as if the sea had figgered out to help Mary have her way.'

"And, Sammy, I think that really was the way Tom Loftus looked at it. Anyhow, three times was enough for him."

Stories of the Sea

never, lose their glamour. There is about them a thrill and a grip no other sort of tale can achieve. It was from stories of the sea that **Peter B. Kyne** gained his first fame. Now and then he goes back to that field, and when he does, the result is a story that rings the bell. Next month's RED BOOK has one of them—a swift-moving, dramatic story of a fight for a woman with the death that is always in wait. Watch for the story entitled: **"The Harbor Bar"**

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THE BALL OF FIRE

Continued from page 984

this evening's opportunities, she had not taken into her calculations the adroitness of Gail. In precisely five minutes Van Ploon was on the doorstep, with his Inverness on his shoulder and his silk hat in his hand, without even having approached the elaborate introduction to certain important remarks he had definitely decided to make. Gail might not have been able to rid herself of him so easily, for he was a person of considerable momentum, but he had planned to make a more deliberate ceremony of the matter, impulsive opportunities not being in his line of thought.

A tall young man in an Inverness walked rapidly past the door while Van Ploon was saying the correctly clever things in the way of adieu; and shortly after she had closed the door on Houston, a pebble struck the side window of the library. Gail opened the window and looked out. Dick Rodley stood just below, with his impossibly handsome face upturned to the light, his black eyes shining with glee, his Inverness tossed romantically back over one shoulder, and an imaginary guitar in his hands. Up into the library floated the familiar opening strains of Tosti's "Serenade," and the Reverend Smith Boyd glanced out through the study door at the enticing figure of Gail, and knitted his brows in a frown.

"You absurd thing," laughed Gail to the serenader. "No, you daren't come in." And she vigorously closed the window. Laughing to herself, she bustled into her wraps.

"Here, where are you going?" called her Uncle Jim.

"Hush!" she admonished him, peering, for a glowing moment, in the study door, a vision of such disturbing loveliness that the Reverend Smith Boyd, for the balance of the evening, saw, staring up at him from the Vedder Court tenement sketches, nothing but eyes and lips and waving brown hair, and delicately ovaled cheeks, their color heightened by

the rolling white fur collar. "None of you must say a word about this," she went on gaily. "It's an escapade!" And she was gone.

Uncle Jim, laughing, but nevertheless intent upon his responsibilities, grabbed her as she opened the front door, but on the step he saw Dick Rodley, and in the machine drawing up at the curb, Arly and Gerald and Lucile and Ted, so he kissed Gail good-night, and passed her over to the jovial Dick, and returned to the study to brag about her.

Gaiety reigned supreme once more! Lights and music and dancing, the latter by kindly volunteers who had no social dignity to maintain, the hum of chatter and laughter, the bustle and confusion of the place, the hilarity which brings a new glow to the cheek and sparkle to the eye, and then home again in the crisp wintry air, and Dick following into the house with carefree assurance.

"Gracious, Dicky, you can't come in!" protested Gail, with half frowning, half laughing remonstrance. "It's a fearful hour for calls."

"I'm a friend of the family," insisted Dick, calmly closing the door behind them and hanging his hat on the rack. He took Gail's cloak and threw off his Inverness. "I guess you've forgotten the program."

"Oh, yes, the proposal," remembered Gail. "Well, have it over with."

"All right," he agreed, and taking her arm and tucking her shoulder comfortably close to him, he walked easily with her back to the library. Arrived there, he seated her on her favorite chair, and drew up another one squarely in front of her.

"I'm going to shock you to death," he told her. "I'm going to propose seriously to you."

Some laughing retort was on her lips, but she caught a look in his eyes which suddenly stopped her.

"I am very much in earnest about it, Gail." His voice bore the stamp of deep



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sincerity. "I love you. I want you to be my wife."

"Dick," protested Gail, and it was she who reached out and placed her hand in his. The action was too confidently frank for him to mistake it.

"I was afraid you'd think that way about it," he said, his voice full of a pain of which they neither one had believed him capable. "This is the first time I ever proposed, except in fun, and I want to make you take me seriously. Gail, I've said so many pretty things to you, that now, when I am in such desperate earnest, there's nothing left but just to try to tell you how much I love you, how much I want you!" He stopped, and holding her hand, patting it gently with unconscious tenderness, he gazed earnestly into her eyes. His own were entirely without that burning glow which he had for so long bestowed on all the young and beautiful. They were almost somber now, and in their depth was an humble wistfulness which made Gail's heart flow out to him.

"I can't, Dick," she told him, smiling affectionately at him. "You're the dearest boy in the world, and I want you for my friend as long as we live, for my very dear friend!"

He studied her in silence for a moment, and then he put his hands on her cheeks and drew her gently towards him. Still smiling into his eyes, she held up her lips, and he kissed her.

"I'd like to say something jolly before I go," he said as he rose, "but I can't seem to think of it."

Gail laughed, but there was a trace of moisture in her eyes as she took his arm.

"I'd like to help you out, Dicky, but I can't think of it either," she returned.

She was crying a little when she went up the stairs, and her mood was not even interrupted by the fact that Aunt Helen's door was ajar, and that Aunt Helen stood just behind the crack.

"Why child, that Egyptian black is running," was Aunt Helen's first observation.

Gail dabbed hastily at the two tiny rivulets which had hesitated at the curve of her pink cheeks, and then she put her head on Aunt Helen's shoulder, and wept softly.

"Poor Dicky," she explained, and then turning, disappeared into her own room.

Mrs. Helen Davies looked after her speculatively for a moment; but she decided not to follow.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Maker of Maps.

THERE began to be strange new stirrings in the world. Money! From the land which was its home and place of abode it leaned over across the wide sea, and made potent whisperings in the ear of the countries where money is despised and held vulgar. They all listened. The particular potency lay in the fact that the money was so big, which took away tremendously from its despicableness and its vulgarity.

A black-bearded grand-duke from the wide land of the frozen seas humbled himself to plain Ivan Strolesky at the sound of that whisper, and hurried westward. A high dignitary of an empire upon which the sun never sets, hid his title under a plebeian name, and stalked stolidly away westward to that whisper of despised American Money. From the land of fashion, the land of toys, the land of art and music, the land of cherry blossoms, the land of the drowsing drug, the land of the flashing jewels, the lands of the burning sands and the lands of the midnight sun, from all these there came the highest of power; and they all, light and swarth, and bearded and smooth, and large and small, and robed and trousered, centered toward the city of strong men, and one by one presented themselves, in turn, to a grave and silent kinky-haired old darcy by the name of Ephraim.

One motive alone had dragged them over sterile plains and snowy mountains and bounding seas: the magic whisper of *Money!* Through Ephraim they came to the stocky, square-standing, square-faced commercial chess player who was called Allison. They found him pleasant, agreeable, but hardly of their class. He was so forceful as to be necessarily more or less crude, and he had an unpleasant fashion of waving aside all the decent little pretenses about money. That

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was the fault of this whole rude country, where luxury had been brought to the greatest refinement ever known in the history of the world; it was so devoted to money, and the cultured gentlemen did their best to get all they could.

To Ivan Strolesky, Allison was frank and friendly, for there was something in the big Russian which was different from these others, and so he hastened to have business out of the way.

"Here are your lines," he said, spreading down a map which had been brought up-to-date by hand. "The ones I want are checked in blue. The others I do not care for."

The Grand Duke looked them over with a keen eye.

"I am rather disappointed," he confessed in excellent English. "I had understood that you wished to control our entire government railway system."

"I do," assented Allison, "but I don't wish to pay out money for them all. If I can acquire the lines I have marked, the others will be controlled quite easily from the fact that I shall have the only outlet."

The Grand Duke, who had played poker in America and fan-tan in China, and roulette in Monte Carlo and all the other games throughout the world, smiled with his impressive big eyes, and put his hand under his beard.

"The matter then seems to resolve itself into a question of price," he commented.

"No—protection," responded Allison. "If I were buying these railroads outright, I should expect my property interests to be guarded, even if I had to appeal to international equity; but I am not."

"No," admitted the Grand Duke. "They cannot be purchased."

"The proposition resolves itself then into a matter of virtual commercial seizure," Allison pointed out.

The Grand Duke, still with his hand in his beard, chuckled as he regarded Allison amusedly.

"I shall not mind if you call it piracy," he observed. "We, in Russia, must collect our revenues as we can, and we are nearly as frank as Americans about it. Returning to your matter of protec-

tion, I shall admit that the only agreement upon which we can secure what you want, would not hold in international equity; and, in consequence, the only protection I can give you is my personal word that you will not be molested in anything which you wish to do, providing it is pleasant to myself and those I represent."

"Then we'll make it an annual payment," decided Allison, putting away some figures he had prepared. "We'll make it a sliding scale, increasing each year with the earnings."

The Grand Duke considered that proposition gravely, and offered an amendment.

"After the first year," he said. "We shall begin with a large bonus, however."

Allison again put out of his mind certain figures he had been prepared to suggest. Apparently the Grand Duke needed a large supply of immediate cash, and the annual payments thereafter would need to be decreased accordingly, with still another percentage deducted for profit on the Duke's necessities.

"Let us first discuss the bonus," proposed Allison, and quite amicably they went into the arrangement, whereby Ivan Strolesky filched the only valuable railroad lines in his country from the control of their present graft-ridden managers, and handed them over to the International Transportation Company.

"By the way," said Allison. "How soon can we obtain possession?"

Ivan Strolesky put his hand in his beard again, and reflected.

"There is only one man who stands in the way," he calculated. "He will be removed immediately upon my return."

There was something so uncanny about this that even the practical and the direct Allison was shocked for an instant; and then he laughed.

"We have still much to learn from your country," he courteously confessed.

When Ivan Strolesky had gone, Allison went to his globe and drew a bright red line across the land of the frozen seas.

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"I do not know what you want," said the visitor, regarding Allison with a stolid stare. "I have come to see."

"I merely wish to chat international politics," returned Allison. "There is an old-time feud between you and your neighbors to the west."

"That is history," replied the visitor noncommittally. "We are now at peace."

"Never peace," denied Allison. "There will never be friendship between phlegmatism and mercurialism. You might rest for centuries with your neighbors to the west, but rest is not peace."

"Excuse me, but what do you mean?" And the visitor stared stolidly.

"In your affairs of mutual relationship with the land to the west, there are not less than a dozen causes upon which war could be started without difficulty," went on Allison. "In fact, you require perpetual diplomacy to prevent war with that country."

The visitor locked his thick fingers quietly together and kept on stolidly staring.

"I hear what you say," he admitted.

"You are about to have a war," Allison advised him.

"I do not believe so." The visitor ponderously shook his head.

"I am sorry to correct you, but you yourself will bring it about. You will make, within a month, an unfortunate error of diplomatic judgment, and your old strip of disputed territory will be alive with soldiers immediately."

"No, it is not true." And the visitor went so far, in his emphasis, as to unlock his fingers and rest one hand on the back of the other.

"I think I am a very fair prophet," said Allison easily. "I have made money by my prophecy. I have more money at my command at the present time than any man in the world, than any government—wealth beyond handling in mere currency. It can only be conveyed by means of checks. Let me show you how easy it is to write them." And drawing a bank book to him, he wrote a check, and tore it out, and handed it to the visitor for inspection. The visitor was properly pleased with Allison's ease in penmanship.

"I see," was the comment, and the

check was handed back. He drew his straight-crowned derby towards him.

"I have made a mistake," said Allison. "I have left off a cipher." And correcting this omission with a new check he tore up the first one.

"I see," commented the visitor, and put the second check in his pocket.

That had required considerable outlay, but when Allison was alone, he went over to his globe and made another long red mark.

A neat-waisted man, with a goatee of carefully selected hairs and a luxuriant black mustache, called on Allison, and laid down his hat and his stick and his gloves, in a neat little pile, with separate jerks. He jerked out a cigarette; he jerked out a match, and jerkily lighted the former with the latter.

"I am here," he said.

"I am able to give you some important diplomatic news," Allison advised him. "Your country is about to have a war with your ancient enemy to the east. It will be declared within a month."

"It will be finished in a week," prophesied the neat-waisted caller, his active eyes lighting with pleasure.

"Possibly," admitted Allison.

"I understand that your country is not in the best of financial condition to undertake a war, particularly with that ancient enemy."

"The banking system of my country is patriotic," returned the caller. "It's only important banks are controlled under one system. I am the head of that system. I am a patriot!" And he tapped himself upon the breast with deep and sincere feeling.

"How much revenue does your position yield you personally?"

A shade of sadness crossed the brow of the neat-waisted caller.

"It does not yield you this much." And Allison pushed toward him a little slip of paper, on which were inscribed some figures.

The caller's eyes widened as they read the sum. He smiled. He shrugged his shoulders. He pushed back the slip of paper.

"It is droll," he laughed, and his laugh was nervous. He drew the slip of paper towards him again with a jerky

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little motion, then pushed it back once more.

"If your banking system found it impossible to be patriotic, your government would be compelled to raise money through other means. It would not withdraw from the war."

"Never!" And the neat-waisted caller once more touched himself on the breast.

"It would be compelled to negotiate a loan. If other governments, through some understanding among their bankers, found it difficult to provide this loan, your government would find it necessary to release its ownership, or at least its control, of its most valuable commercial possession."

The caller, who had followed Allison's progressive statement with interest, gave a quick little nod of his head.

"That most valuable commercial possession," went on Allison, "is the state railways! You were convinced by my agent that there is a new and powerful force in the world, or you would not be here. Suppose I point out that it is possible to so cramp your banking system that you could not help your country, if you would; suppose I show you that, in the end, your ancient enemy will lose its identity, while your country remains intact; suppose I show you that the course I have proposed is the only way open which will save your country from annihilation? What then?"

The neat-waisted caller, with the first slow motion he had used since he came into the room, drew the slip of paper towards him again.

There followed another banker, a rudely-faced man whose heavy features were utterly incapable of emotion; and he sat at Allison's table in thick-jowled solidity.

"There are about to begin international movements of the utmost importance," Allison told him. "There is a war scheduled for next month, which is likely to embroil the whole of Europe."

The banking gentleman nodded his head almost imperceptibly.

"Mr. Chisholm advised me that your sources of information are authentic," he stated. "What you tell me is most deplorable."

"Quite," agreed Allison. "I am in-

formed that the company you represent and manage has the practical direction of the entire banking system of Europe, with the exception of one country. Besides this, you have powerful interests, amounting very nearly to a monopoly, in Egypt, in India, in Australia, and in a dozen other quarters of the globe."

"You seem to be accurately informed," admitted the banking gentleman, studying interestedly the glowing coals in Allison's fireplace.

"If I can show you how a certain attitude towards the international complications which are about to ensue will be of immense advantage to your banking system, as well as to the interests I represent, I have no doubt that we can come to a very definite understanding."

The solidly jowled banking gentleman studied the glowing coals for two minutes.

"I should be interested in learning the exact details," he finally suggested.

Allison drew some sheets of paper from an indexed file, and spread them before the financier. It was largely a matter of credits in the beginning, extensions here, curtailments there, and all on a scale so gigantic that both gentlemen went over every item with the imaginative minds of poets. In every line there was a vista of vast empires, of topping thrones, of altered boundaries, of such an endless and shifting panorama of governmental forces, that the minds of men less innured to the contemplation of commercial and political revolutions might have grown fagged. On the third page, the solid banking gentleman, who had not made a nervous motion since he was a boy, looked up with a start.

"Why, this affects my own country!" he exclaimed. "It affects our enormous shipping interests, our great transportation lines, our commercial ramifications in all parts of the globe! It cripples us on the land and wipes us from the sea! It even affects my own government!"

"Quite true," admitted Allison. "However, I beg you to take notice that, with the international complications now about to set in, your government has reached its logical moment of disintegration. Your colonies and dependencies are only waiting for your startlingly



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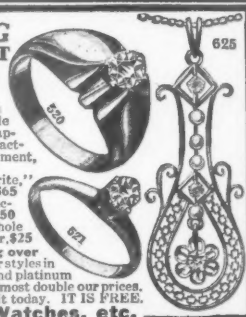
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The banking gentleman drew a long breath.

"What you predict may not come to pass," he maintained, although the secret information which had brought him to Allison had prepared him to take every statement seriously.

"I can show you proofs!" The war which is to be started next month is only the keystone of the political arch of the entire eastern hemisphere. There are a dozen wars, each bigger than the other, slated to follow, if needed, like the pressing of a row of electric buttons. Knowing these things as you shall, it is only a question of whether you will be with me on the crest, or by yourself in the hollow."

The caller moistened his lips, and turned his gaze finally from the glowing coals to Allison's face.

"Show me everything you know," he demanded.

They sat together until morning, and they traversed the world; and, when that visitor had gone, Allison gave his globe a contemptuous whirl.

The balance of them were but matters of detail. With a certain prideful arrogance, of which he himself was aware,

he reflected that now he could almost leave these minor powers and potentates and dignitaries to a secretary; but nevertheless he saw them all. One by one they betrayed their countrymen, their governments, their ideals and their consciences, and all for the commodity to which Allison had but to add another cipher when it was not enough! It was not that there were none but traitors in the world, but that Allison's agents had selected the proper men. Moreover, Allison was able to show them a scepter of resistless might: the combined money, and power, and control, and wide-reaching arms of the seven greatest monopolies the world had ever known! There was no strength of resistance in any man after he had been brought, face to face, with this new giant.

It was in the gray of one morning when Allison was through with his last enforced collaborator, and, walking over to his globe, he twirled it slowly.

It was lined and streaked and crossed, over all its surface now, with red, and it was the following of this intricate web which brought back to him the triumph of his achievement. He had harnessed the world, and now he had but to drive it. That was the next step, and he clenched his fist to feel the sheer physical strength of his muscles, as if it were with this very hand that he would do the driving.

Intoxicated with a sense of his own power, he went back into his study, and drew from a drawer the photograph of a young and beautiful girl, who seemed to look up at him out of deep and glowing brown eyes, her oval face wreathed with waving brown hair, and set with beautifully curved lips which twitched at the corners with a half sarcastic smile. Every morning he had looked at this photograph: the priceless crown of his achievement, the glittering jewel to set in the head of his scepter, the beautiful medallion of his valor!

"Only a little longer, Gail," he told her with a smile, and then he saluted the photograph.

"Gail, the maker of maps!" he said.

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WHAT WILL PEOPLE SAY?

Continued from page 933, this issue

He moved on, leaning heavily on Forbes, but Winifred, seeing him about to escape, pounced on him and led him away in search of an imaginary diplomat.

Forbes, left alone, sank again on the marble bench, a prey to his thoughts. He felt that if he waited in this semi-obscurity, he would not be discovered by Persis. But she was hunting for him. She had eluded Willie, and appeared in the garden, just as the Senator was being haled away. She paused to wait for Forbes to be alone, and at that moment her husband regained her side; she heard his voice.

LIV

"I say, Persis, I lost track of you in that ghastly mob. I'm sorry. By the way, wasn't that tall fella in the uniform the same Lieutenant What's-his-name that was honeying around Mrs. Neff?"

Persis was in too fierce a mood to continue that nonsense. She turned on Willie as she-wolf turns on a terrier:

"Oh, Lord! Can't I escape you for a moment? Do go somewhere and smoke something, or if the worst comes to the worst, drink something, but don't stand there making green eyes at me like an ape."

"Green eyes like an ape—" he echoed stupidly. "Well, I'll be—" Then an unusual vigor of wrath stirred him. "Look here, Persis, I won't have *you* make fun of me. Everybody else laughs at me, even for winning you. They think you've made a fool of me, and they think you couldn't have married me except for my money. I don't suppose it could be love—nobody ever did love *me*. But whatever it was that made you marry me, you did marry me, and by gad, you've got to remember it."

"There's no danger of my forgetting that," Persis snapped, frantic lest Forbes escape her. "Don't be odious! Don't make me hate you."

Willie grew the more fierce: "Well, I'd rather have you hate me than make a fool of me. I won't be laughed at. . . . I won't."

Persis groaned with repugnance: "Oh, you've ceased to be a laughing matter to me, Willie."

Willie was about to reply in kind but he gave her a long look and seeing how beautiful she was, grew more tender: "Everything seems to have ceased to be a laughing matter to you, Persis. What has come over you? Before we were married, you were always laughing—at everything, everybody. I'm a rather serious, solemn ass—to myself at least, but I used to love to watch you. Even when you geyed me, I didn't much mind—because there was fun in it. I used to say I'd give everything I possessed just to have you about, and see the world through your eyes. But from the time we were married you quit laughing. Hang it all, I married you to cheer me up a bit. What in Heaven's name has changed you?"

Before this weakness she relented a little: "Oh, nothing has changed me. Don't worry about me. I'm just a trifle bored with life."

Never dreaming how eager she was to be rid of him, he tried to please her in every manner but the one sure method of going away. He grew desperate: "Isn't there anything you want that money can buy?"

"I don't want anything that money can buy," was her dreary confession. Somehow he seemed now to understand:

"I suppose you're just tired of me," he sighed, "everlasting me. I must be a nuisance to you. God knows I am to myself."

She looked at him with suddenly gentler eyes. Not condemning himself, he was commending himself, for the best approach to the human tribunal as to the heavenly, is with a humble and contrite heart. Persis felt so sorry for him that her hand went out to his. But he did not



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see it; he had wandered off to find some one to lead him to a Scotch highball.

But Persis, now that she was rid of him, was unable to glide forward to the marble bench where she could see Forbes ensconced in a grotto of shadow and a mood of gloom.

The thought of what she was about to do gave her pause. She realized the atrocity of attempting to keep Forbes in mind when she had taken such solemn vows so publicly. She must be kinder to Willie. She tried to dismiss her conscience by telling herself that it would be childish to run away from Forbes. She caught sight of Mrs. Neff hovering about with the recaptured Alice. She dreaded what interpretation Mrs. Neff would put upon her appearance in the environs of Forbes. She remembered with what fierce criticism she had always met the slightest indiscretions of other married women.

Later, Persis regretted her hesitation. She had wasted a precious opportunity to warm her chilled soul with a word from the beloved lips, and a look from eyes and a pressure of a hand that were dearer than any others in the world to her.

She was amazed at her own ability to suffer so much from the loss of so little. She felt an impulse to be alone with her anguish, to huddle over the hearth where the ashes could at least remind her of how warm and cosy she once had been.

She sent for Willie and he came with a slight elevation of manner which showed that he had found some one to arrange him at least one Scotch and soda.

He was demonstrative in the car and very affectionate in the elevator at the Hotel Meurice, where they were stopping. This did not endear him to Persis.

His man exchanged a glance with her maid as they peeled off their wraps. When man and maid had been sent to bed, Willie came shuffling into Persis' dressing-room, where she sat staring at her doleful beauty in the mirror. He saw how listless she was and was awkwardly eager to cheer her up. He could not have depressed her more than by trying to cheer her up. Even he realized his failure eventually and yawned sonorously:

"We're married, and I suppose we've got to stay married—for a while at least. But I hate to see you unhappy. It's an awful slam on me to have you blue so soon. I say, Persis, buck up! Don't feel like this. You're so beautiful; you're simply ripping to-night."

He laid his hand on her bare arm. She started at his touch and gasped: "Please don't paw me."

He stared at her aghast: "Do you hate me as much as that?"

"No. I don't hate you. It's myself I hate," Persis cried. "You mustn't mind me; I'm just a little blue, and lonely."

He laughed grewsomely: "Bride and groom together on honeymoon, and both terribly lonely! Gad! I wonder if other married couples come to feel this way when the honeymoon turns to green cheese? And do they just bluff it through? It reminds me of that chap in Hogarth's 'Mariage à la Mode,' where the wife is yawning and the husband is sunk back in his chair in a dismal stupor. Only, he was drunk—I think I'll get drunk."

He stumbled out to find his usual nepenthe. When he came back, her door was locked.

LV

Persis sat in grim communion with her image for hours. She faintly heard her husband's tapping on her door, and calling through it at intervals in thicker and thicker speech. But it was like a far-off rumor from a street. She was in session with herself.

She took her boudoir cap from her hair and sat in the cascade of it, peering through as from a cavern, and smoking always. She was smoking much, too much, but she felt a companionship in tobacco. As she held the cap in her hand, she thought of Forbes; and the remembrance was so joyous that she vowed to brave the world to get back to him.

But she pondered what the world would say of her, how it had dealt with the others that had openly defied it, and she was afraid. Then she vowed that she would take her love secretly and cleverly. She would hunt for Forbes till she met him and regained him.

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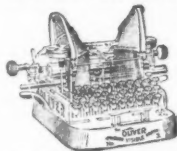
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Then she pictured how he would look at her when he understood. She imagined him starting back from her as from something abhorrent. She threw a cigarette stub at her face in the mirror and gasped: "Pagh!" She could endure anything better than such cheapening of herself in Forbes' eyes. And after a while she began to think of her self-respect. She had only herself. She must keep that self precious.

Worn out at last with her silent war, she bent her head on her crossed hands and fell asleep among the fripperies of her dressing table. These temptations in the wilderness come to people in various places. This tired butterfly fought with evil in a boudoir in a fashionable hotel in Paris.

Hours later she woke in broad daylight and crept to bed with tingling arms and aching forehead. She did not wake again till noon. Nichette had tiptoed about her like a sentinel and had kept Willie at a distance. He discharged her a dozen times but she simply shrugged and sniffed and answered him in French too rapid for him to follow or reply to.

When at last Persis sat with her coffee and crescents on her knees, Nichette read to her the news in the French columns of the *Paris Herald*. She learned that Ambassador-elect Tait and his entourage had gone to Evian-les-bains.

Willie came in with new plans for Persis' diversion. He suggested a visit to Switzerland and Lake Geneva. She would have liked to go to the mountains. There was something heroic in them. But Evian was closely adjacent to Switzerland. She nobly suggested Norway and Sweden. The thought of fjords and midnight suns and things was also heroic.

In the meanwhile she must make haste to dress for the *Prix de Drags* and she took some interest in the choice of a gown striking enough to ensure success in the fierce rivalry of that great costume-race.

Everybody said that the world had not seen such undressing in public since the Grecian revival at the time of the Directoire. Persis was not the least astounding figure there. She felt that, after a deed of such sacrifice as she had

achieved in forswearing love, she had earned an extra license in her draperies. Willie raised a wild row about her gown, but she felt that she had done enough for him. She was suffering that morning-after sullenness which follows unusual indulgences in virtue as well as other excesses.

Life once more was a tango. She shifted from costume to costume like a dress-maker's model. She went the rounds of *thés dansants*, and musicales, and embassies, town houses, hotels, and châteaux, watering places, and mountains, lakes and seas. But she kept away from Switzerland till she read that Ambassador Tait was at his desk in Paris, and later she avoided Paris and went to Trouville.

And so the days passed into weeks, and the weeks became a month, two, three, six. She fled from boredom to boredom. She skimmed the cream of life and whipped it, and it turned sour. Though her abiding places were all oases and her tents were of silk, she led only a Bedouin existence. After all, she and Willie were but tramps—velvet clad hoboes. Variety became monotonous, luxury an oppression, contentment a will-o'-the-wisp.

She went to America and found that loveless contentment was not among the Yankee inventions. She went back to Europe and it was not among the Parisian devices. There was everything for sale on the Rue de la Paix except peace. She had not come to Paris purposely to find Harvey Forbes, but she had sickened of being good, she had grown nauseated with denying her heart. If fate willed that their love should be renewed, she would no longer tamper with destiny.

She wondered if time had cured Forbes' love. She wondered if he cared for some one else—Mildred Tait, for instance, or some Parisian witch. At the mere thought her heart beat like the wings of a wounded bird, and she knew that she loved and always would love him.

Half a year of Willie's tempers and whinings, his indigestions and colds, and his diminishing interest in her whims, his growing habit of complaining of her extravagances, his quarrels with their servants, with every waiter, every messenger boy, and hotel-keeper, had worn

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out even her courtesy. They quarreled shamelessly in private, and with less and less caution in public.

And now she was beginning to feel that she earned all she got, and was paying usury on her money, and being badly treated in the bargain. She was arriving at that sick frame of mind that makes cashiers and statesmen and married people unfaithful to their trusts.

This was her humor when she met Forbes again. She had tried in various ways to gain invitations to affairs of the Embassy. But Ambassador Tait wasted no diplomacy in cutting out the Enslees. He was the more brutal about this since he felt that he was guarding his daughter's welfare.

Mildred had made herself dear to the more earnest elements of Paris. She had grown somewhat less of a joke to the more frivolous. The entertainments at the Embassy were not quite so Puritanical now, and her costumes had amazingly improved since her father had put her under the direct control of a tyrannical dressmaker of world-wide fame.

Whether she were growing to be merely a habit with Forbes or not, they were more and more together. Senator Tait was preparing for the great day by making Forbes less poor. His post kept him from taking advantage of the financial secrets he stumbled on. But when he put Mildred in the hands of a dressmaker, he gave the financial destinies of Forbes to a retired capitalist, who juggled Forbes' five hundred dollars into a thousand in a pair of weeks, and that thousand into three. Then he encouraged Forbes to borrow, and endorsed his notes and speculated with the proceeds pyramidally. He was enjoying it as a form of chess. At the end of half a year Forbes was talking as much of the Bourse and rentes as he was of projectiles and trajectories.

Having assured Forbes of enough money in bank to give him a salubrious self-confidence, Senator Tait dropped hints of a certain clause in his will, and sat back to watch the result. He was counting on receiving as his Christmas gift the news that Forbes and Mildred were to be married, and he was polishing up a joke about giving them inside

rates on the consular fees and services for that complicated ceremony.

And then the Enslees came to Paris in a snow storm, and winter set in about the old man's overworked, undermined heart. He did his best to keep Persis and Forbes apart; but when were the old ever vigilant enough to thwart the young?

LVI

It was at the *thé dansant* given by Mrs. Mather-Edgecumbe that Persis met Forbes first.

The *thé dansant* was a failure in Mrs. Mather-Edgecumbe's mind, and in her sister Winifred's heart, for the storm kept most of the Parisians away, and the Ambassador sent word by Forbes that he would be tardy if he could come at all. He pleaded motives of State. But he sent Forbes with his apologies.

Forbes, having been on a visit in his official capacity, was again in uniform. His eyes and cheeks were aglow from the cold, and Persis watched him with adoration as he came nearer and nearer.

He paused to talk to Mrs. Edgecumbe, so close to Persis that she could touch him. And when she could not endure the delay any longer, she thrust her hand beneath his eyes, and murmured:

"Captain Forbes doesn't remember me, but I met him in New York."

Her voice out of the grave of memory terrified him. He whirled so quickly that his sword caught in her gown. He knelt to disengage it and there was laughter over the confusion, and then Mrs. Mather-Edgecumbe was called away by a newcomer and they were left together.

Persis beamed upon the complete disarray of all her lover's faculties, and spoke with affected raillery, though her own mind was in a seethe:

"At last we meet again! And how magnificent we are in our gorgeous uniform. And I believe we are no longer plain Mr. Forbes—but Captain! Captain Harvey Forbes, U. S. A.! And they say we are rich now. What a pity I didn't wait a little!"

Forbes was hurt at her flippancy. He smiled dismally and she cooed on: "I assure you your title and your wealth

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are vastly becoming, almost as becoming as all these buttons and epaulettes and things." She walked around him, looking him all over like an inspecting officer. "Umm! How very nice! Magnificent!"

"Oh, I beg of you—" Forbes protested, tortured with chagrin.

She tantalized him with a strange mixture of ridicule and idolatry: "I've no doubt the boulevards are strewn with the broken hearts of French women. Who would resist you? I'm sure my own heart isn't anywhere near healed. It was very cruel of you, Harvey, to throw me over and run away, after you had stolen my poor young affections."

Forbes was distraught. He groaned: "I see you have not forgotten how to make fun of me."

But Persis went on in mock petulance: "It wasn't at all nice of you to cast me off just because I married Willie."

Forbes slashed at her: "Why do you torment me? You refused my love once."

"Never your love, my dear boy," said Persis with abrupt seriousness. "I never refused your love—only your hand. I always encouraged your *love*."

"But I was poor," Forbes sneered.

"Yes, you were poor," Persis said, taking his own word and turning it against him. "And I knew less than I do now." She walked away to a niche beside a statue where they could talk without being overheard, but, being visible, were chaperoned by the crowd. She sank upon a settle of gold and old rose and motioned him to her side. Then while her face and her fan proclaimed that their conversation was of the idlest, her voice was deep with elegy:

"Harvey! try to be just. Haven't I been honest with you? You declared that you loved me; I confessed that I—I loved you."

"Was it honest not to give me your heart?"

"My whole heart has always been yours for the asking. And still is."

Forbes recoiled with a sudden. "What are you saying? You have a husband now."

"What does that prove?" was Persis' grim reply. "I don't owe him anything in the inside of my heart. He didn't buy that, thank God! Before the world,

I owe him everything, and I should be the first to abhor any open indiscretion, for my ten commandments consist of these two: 'Do not be indiscreet' and 'Beware of what people will say!' What more could a husband ask?"

Forbes tossed his hands in despair. He gave her up. She and her creed were beyond his understanding. He could only sneer: "A fine code, that!"

"It is the morality of half the world, Harvey, rich or poor, city or country," Persis declared. "The crime consists in being found out."

"Do you realize what you are saying?" Forbes demanded, eager to shield her from her own blasphemies. But she ran on unheeding: "Even I have a heart, and why should I play the hypocrite before you of all men? Before Willie Enslee? Yes!—he is my husband. Before the gossipy world? Yes—it is the one duty I feel I owe that man. Ours was no marriage for love."

"But it was a marriage," Forbes urged stoutly, and rose to escape.

"Yes, but after all, what is a marriage?" Persis demanded, with a skeptic's sneer. She rose to her feet, but paused as ardor swept her headlong. "Do you think it possible for any woman to live her life out without love? She may cherish the memory of a dead man, or a faithless man; she may throw her affection on a fool or a rake; she may keep it a secret almost from herself, but never, never, never! believe that any woman can exist without some man to pay worship to."

Forbes could only attempt a weak sarcasm: "Is it impossible that a woman should love her husband?" In a daze he sank back, forgetful that he left her standing; but she was too much engrossed with her great problem to heed this; she went on earnestly: "Any woman may love her husband for a little while; or in rare cases for a lifetime, especially if he beats her or is a drunkard." Then her unwonted oratory on abstract subjects palled on her. She came back to the concrete instance with an abrupt: "But Harvey, Harvey, why should we be wasting time talking about love?" She bent over him but he did not even look up at her. He shook his



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head helplessly: "I was not bred in your world! I cannot understand a thing you have said."

His aloofness of manner gave Persis a sense of loneliness and she wailed to him as from afar, though she sank down close to him: "But can't you understand how fate has made a fool of me? I married for wealth and to cut a wide swath. Well, I have the wealth. I can cut the swath. But I've found that my ambition isn't enough any more than your soldier ambitions were enough. Harvey, I'm lonely, terribly lonely. My heart is empty; it is like an old deserted house, and a ghost haunts it, and the ghost is—need I tell you who that ghost is?"

"Need I tell you," Forbes echoed, "what ghost haunts my heart and fills all my life with vanity?"

Persis was melted by his kinship with her suffering. She leaned so close to him that her very perfume appealed to him as the perfume wherewith one flower calls to another in the noontide of desire. And she said: "Harvey, let me tell you a terrible secret: I—I crossed the ocean to find you!"

He was suffocated with longing for her, and horror of her. He gasped: "My God! On your honeymoon!"

Always, nowadays, there seems to be a band somewhere playing a turkey-trot. It was such a band, and such music was to be expected here, but there was something whimsical about the fact that the tune the band struck up now was a ragtime version of Mendelssohn's Wedding March.

Persis was so eager to be in Forbes' arms again and the dance was so ample an excuse, that she smiled into his mask of horror:

"We haven't tangoed for ever so long."

A wanton whoop of the violins swept away all such solemn things as honor, decency, duty. He rose and caught her in his embrace. It was the same girlish body, irresistibly warm and lithe. They swung and sidled and hopped with utter cynicism. The only remnant of his horror was a foolish, bewildered, muttered:

"How could you?"

"Come to Paris?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Because I felt you still loved me as I still love you, and because I thought you were—perhaps—afraid."

"Afraid, eh?" He laughed, his professional soldier's pride on fire. "Well, I don't think you will find me a coward."

And he tightened his arm about her like a vise and spun her so dizzily, that though she was rejoiced by his brutality, the discretion that was her decalogue spoiled her rapture. She felt again that swoon of fear, and made him lead her back to their niche.

She did not know that Ambassador Tait had come in and had witnessed the vortex, was watching now with terror the look on Forbes' face, and her answering smile. He could not hear their words. He did not need to. He knew what their import would be.

Persis, ignorant of his espionage, sighed: "Oh, it is wonderful to be together again."

"Wonderful!" Forbes panted. "But your husband?"

Persis uttered that ugly old truth, "If we can evade gossip abroad, we shall be safe enough at home."

And as if in object lesson, Willie Enslee jogged up at that very moment. He showed the influence of mild tipping on a limited capacity, and coming forward shook hands foolishly and forcibly with Captain Forbes. "How d'ye do—Mr. Ward," he drawled.

"Captain Forbes, dear," Persis corrected.

"That's right. I always was an ass about names, Mr. Ward. I haven't seen you for years and years, have we? Have you met my wife? Oh, of course you have."

Forbes was revolted. There was something loathsome about the little farce. Enslee reminded him of the clown in "I Pagliacci," and Persis, like another *Nedda*, was determined to finish the scene. Holding her fan at her side opposite to Enslee, she said with innocent voice: "Oh, Willie, I've lost my fan somewhere; would you mind looking for it?"

Obediently Enslee turned and wandered about, scanning the floor carefully and chortling idiotically: "Fan, fan,

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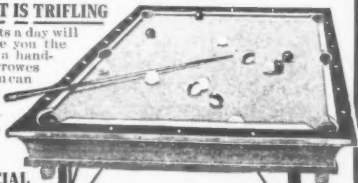
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who's got the fan?" And so he floated harmlessly and blindly out of the cloud that was thickening around his household.

Persis laughed. "You see what an ideal husband Willie is?" But Forbes, who had a strong stomach for warfare with its mangled enemies and shattered comrades, shuddered at this tame domestic horror. He blurted out: "It is all the more horrible to deceive a fool."

"Oh, now you're becoming scrupulous again!" said Persis, who thought pride of little moment in the face of the victory she had set her heart on.

But now she was confronted by an adversary of more weight and acumen than Willie, a man whose trade was diplomacy and politics: Ambassador Tait, came forward. He was a little pale and weak and he felt his heart laboring in his breast, but he had at least one more good fight in him; and when he found Forbes hopelessly and plainly enmeshed, though struggling in Persis' gossamer web, the old man resolved to make the fight at whatever cost.

After a moment of hesitation he came briskly forward with a blunt "Pardon me a moment, Mrs. Enslee; I have an important communication for the Captain. These state secrets, you know—" And he led Forbes to an adjoining room, the library, where he said in a low tone, "Harvey, my boy, I've cooked up an imaginary errand to get you away from her."

But Forbes tossed his head at this aspersions on his ability to take care of himself. He answered: "I'm not afraid."

Ambassador Tait eyed Forbes sadly; he answered: "Well, I'm afraid for you. You're not responsible when you're in her magnetic circle."

Then, seeing that Persis had resolutely followed them into the room, he raised his voice for Persis' benefit: "You'll find the papers on my desk. Read them carefully and sign them if they're all right. They must be mailed to-night." And deliberately but gently he pushed the reluctant and faltering Captain from the room, hardly leaving him time to say, "You'll excuse me, Mrs. Enslee?"

Persis understood it all and answered with thinly veiled pique, "I'll have to."

But she would not surrender him so easily. She called after Forbes, "I'll expect you back as soon as you have signed those—alleged papers."

The Ambassador was jolted. He could think of nothing to say. He watched Forbes go, then started to follow; noted that Persis was alone and remembered his courtesy enough to ask:

"May I send you an ice—or your husband?"

"An ice—or my husband?" Persis was forced to smile at such a collocation. "Neither, please. Sit down, Ambassador."

He had not expected this. With a hesitating "Er—ah! Thank you!" he seated himself as far as possible from her, on a leather divan. Immediately she rose, crossed the room, and sat next to him. There was no escaping her now, and Ambassador Tait felt like calling for help.

Persis forsook all amenities of diplomacy and cut straight to the point. "Ambassador Tait, why don't you like me?"

"Why,—I—I admire you immensely," he gasped, amazed at her directness.

"Oh, drop diplomacy. I'm not the President of France." Persis said with a whit of vexation. When a woman answers a compliment with anger, she means business. Persis repeated: "I said, why don't you like me?"

"But—I—I—" He fumbled for a word; then, somewhat angered by his discomfort, he met a woman's directness with a man's bluntness: "Well, why should I?"

Persis parried his rudeness with a return to gentle measures; she beamed: "I'm very nice! I was good to my mother! I'm good to my husband."

"But are you?"

"I'm as good a wife as he deserves. You've seen him?"

The Ambassador laughed in spite of himself, for he was one of Willie's numberless non-admirers. Now Persis, seeing him smiling, returned to open attack.

"You love Captain Forbes, don't you?" Persis lunged at his heart again, and he answered solemnly:

"Yes, I do, as if he were my own son."

"Why don't you want me to see him?"

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"Why do you want to see him? You're married."

"But they don't keep women in harems nowadays. Do you think that I can find Mr. Enslee so fascinating that I must give up all my friends?"

"Friends?" Tait exclaimed with bitterness. "In my day, Mrs. Enslee, I have seen some of the proudest families in New York dragged into the mire of public shame by tragedies that began as innocent experiments in friendship. Don't risk it, Mrs. Enslee. You are on dangerous ground. And, since we are talking so bluntly, you'll perhaps permit me to say that I know you are not happily married. Everybody knew you never would be happy with Willie Enslee."

"I thought I'd be as happy with him as with anybody," she answered meekly, "but since you assume that I am not happy, why deny me the friendship of a man whose society I am fond of? Don't you think that everybody has the right to be happy?"

"Indeed I don't!"

"Doesn't the Constitution—or the Declaration of Independence or something—guarantee everybody the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of—"

"Yes, the pursuit—" the Ambassador cried. "But the Constitution doesn't guarantee that anybody will get happiness, and there are laws that take away life, take away liberty, take away even the right to the pursuit of happiness."

She was on unfamiliar ground in ethics. She was more at home in emotion: "Let's not get into a legal debate. All I know is that Harvey used to love me and I loved him too much to marry him; because he was poor—and because I was bred to reckless extravagance. Besides, I had ambitions—I didn't know then what a vanity they were. But now—well, I don't pretend to be a saint, but I have a heart—a kind of a heart. I love only one man on earth. You know that he still loves me. Don't rob us of the happiness we can find in each other's society—the innocent happiness."

A gesture of unbelief escaped him. "How long could such love remain innocent—when it begins by being unlawful?"

"But I love him," she insisted, "and

he loves me, with all his heart. Some day, I presume—" The coming sorrow cast its shadow over her already. "Some day, no doubt, he'll find somebody he loves more, and he'll marry her. He can have anybody now; but when he came to me he was poor, he needed money. But I also needed money, position! Things have changed: money has come to him, as it always comes, too late. But that's no reason for robbing me of my little chance for a little while of happiness. And you mustn't, oh, you mustn't rob him of the happiness I could give him!"

Ambassador Tait was always afraid of himself when his tenderness was appealed to, for he knew from experience that such an appeal, if hearkened to a moment too long, would smother all judgment, all resistance. He felt his heart yearning toward Persis' world-old cry: "Happiness! Happiness! a little happiness!" He tried to be harsh: "But my good woman—my dear girl—you had your chance—you made your choice. You must pay the price. We can't all have the love we want. I can't. You can't."

Persis laid her hand on his arm: "But why? Why?"

And Tait after a weak temptation girded himself for the awful battle with unholy happiness and answered with Mosaic simplicity: "Because it is against the law!"

"But you know," Persis returned, unabashed,—"you were once a lawyer—you know that the laws in the books are only made for those who haven't the skill to bend them without breaking them."

"Such a love as yours is against the great unwritten laws of society."

Persis would not be crushed with precepts. She sneered: "Society! Is anybody on the square? Why shouldn't we be happy in our own way?" Tait hesitated, then answered coldly: "There are ten thousand reasons. I'll give you the one that will appeal to you most strongly: You're bound to get found out."

"Don't you think I have any discretion? Do you think I am a fool?"

"The first sign of being a fool is trying to play double with the world. Some day—let me warn you!—some day you will find yourself so tangled up in

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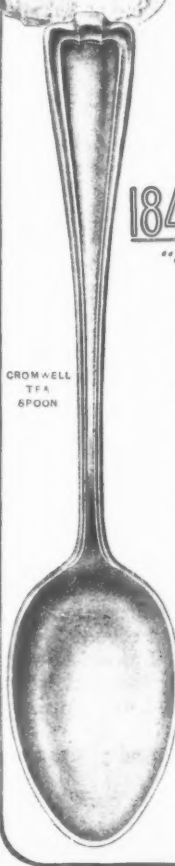
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your own cleverness that you will be delivered, bound hand and foot, to the shame—yes, the shame of a horrible exposure."

She blanched at this facer: "Don't speak to me as though I were a criminal."

He struck out again: "Then don't become one. You have no right to love Captain Forbes, nor he to love you." Tait put off all restraint of courtesy: "I understand your creed, the creed of your set. You're not afraid of any risk. You fear nothing but self-sacrifice. Your greatest horror is being bored. But you'll find that there is a worse boredom than you suffer now—the ennui of exile, of ostracism. The very set that practices your theory is the most merciless to those that get found out. It's like a pack of wolves on the chase. The one that falls or is wounded is torn to pieces by the rest—and then they rush on again. I mean to save Harvey from that pack, at any cost."

She had no refuge but a prayer: "I implore you not to break my heart."

The Ambassador donned in manner the black cap of a judge. "Such hearts as yours ought to be broken. Mrs. Enslie, for the health of the world. I understand you. I don't blame you—I don't blame your mother in her grave. It was her breeding, as it is yours and that of your pack. You are the people who bring wealth into disrepute. The noise of your revels drowns the quiet charities of the rich who are also good and busy with noble works. I'm afraid of you all. But I don't blame you. I don't blame the criminals, the thieves, madmen, but I fear them. And in all mercy I would mercilessly put them out of the way of doing harm to the peace of the world."

Persis saw that for once, appeal could not melt. She said with resignation, "Then you are my sworn enemy?"

"No," he protested, "I would be your friend as far as I safely can. But I love Harvey as a son. I would save him from the flames of perdition, beautiful as they are, bright as they are. And you are the fire."

"And so you will fight me?" Persis faltered.

"To the death!" the old jurist cried,

as he got heavily to his feet, "though it breaks Harvey's heart—and your heart—and mine." He staggered weakly and jolted against the divan.

LVII

Persis, forgetting that he was her enemy, leaped to his aid, with instinctive womanliness. "You are ill—let me get you something."

The Ambassador straightened himself with an effort, saying: "I'm all right now, thank you." He was touched by her sudden charity in his behalf. Eyeing her sadly, and taking her hand, he spoke venerably as a father:

"I'm all right now, thank you. I mustn't let myself get excited, that's all." He was too sad for her sake to be sad for his own. "I'm sorry for you, little woman," he said. "You've a big, warm heart. But this is a cold, hard world, and you mustn't try to break its laws. They are based on the scandals and the tragedies of thousands of years, millions on millions of foolish lovers. The world is old, my child, and it is stronger than any of us. And it can punish without mercy. Don't risk it."

Persis had never been talked to like this. An almost unknown earnestness stirred her: "You're right, of course. I suppose I must give up all hope of happiness now. It's my punishment. I'll take my medicine."

"That's splendid!" he cried. "Live square—in the open. Respect the conventionalities; they're the world's code of morals. If you really love Harvey, let him go his way."

"I'll prove to you that I do love him!" she said, laughing nervously. "I'll give him up. He used to think I was heartless and mercenary. He shall go on thinking so. It's awfully hard, but it is the one way I can help him, isn't it?"

The old man squeezed her hand in both of his: "God bless you! And you won't see him again?"

"No," she said with all the vigor of her soul. Then she caught a glimpse of Forbes. He had returned hurriedly. He was looking for her. She amended her promise: "Except to tell him good-by. I've got to tell him good-by—and make

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him think I was only—only fooling him, haven't I?"

The old man's triumph collapsed again. But he could not demand everything. He nodded and left her, as Forbes appeared at the door. Like the mocking laughter of fiends, the band brayed another tango. It was faint in the distance, but it was like a cynic's comment. Persis made haste to get her business done.

"Well, Harvey, good-by. I'm off to Capri to-morrow."

"But I thought—" he stammered. "You are going to leave just as we meet again? But I thought—"

"You never could take a joke, could you, Harvey?"

"But you said you loved me. I hurried back to be with you. I was on fire with the old love again."

"I'm sorry, Harvey. But I couldn't love you. I'm married now."

She was turning his own weapons on him. He was befuddled with her whims. He repeated: "You told me you loved me, that you were unhappy."

"You ought to have known I was only fooling you. I'm Mrs. Enslee now. And whom God hath joined—"

He was beside himself with rage. She had wheedled him out of his honor, and now she mocked him where she had left him. He sneered.

"God didn't join you and Enslee. God's voice doesn't speak every time a hired preacher reaches out for a wedding fee! It was the devil that joined you, and God keeps you asunder. God joined us. He meant us for each other. But you—you hadn't the courage to face a little poverty. You wanted prestige and position, and you bought them with the love that belonged to me. You haven't the courage now to deny that you are unhappy, that you love me still."

She trembled before the storm of his wrath: "But I don't—I don't love you any more. I am happy."

"You can't look me in the eyes, Persis, and repeat that—lie."

She tried vainly to meet his glare. She mumbled weakly: "Why, I'm happy—enough."

"Do you love me still?" he demanded.

"No—no, of course not."

He wanted to strike her primevally for a coward, a liar, a female cad. He controlled himself and groaned: "Well, that makes everything simpler. Good-by."

She seized his arm, and threw off the disguise. "Harvey, Harvey, I can't stand it. I can't endure the thought of it. I can't live without your love. I don't care what happens. I never did love anybody else but you. I never shall."

His love came back in a wild wave. He seized her blindly, and she hid blindly in his arms, sobbing: "I am unhappy, unutterably lonely. You must love me, Harvey, for I love you. I love you."

They were as oblivious of their peril as *Tristan* and *Isolde* in the spell of the love philter. The old Ambassador, who had hovered near to shield their farewell, appeared like a thunderbolt. He entered the room gasping: "Can I believe my eyes? Are you both lost to honor—decency? Is this your discretion, Mrs. Enslee? Do you realize where you are?"

Persis toppled out of Forbes' relaxed embrace, and spoke from a daze: "No—I forgot—I must be out of my mind."

Forbes came to her defence: "You mustn't blame her. It was my fault."

"No, it was mine," Persis insisted. "But I couldn't help it."

Tait was filled with contempt: "Suppose it had been any of the guests that had found you two maniacs as I did. Suppose I had been Enslee—!"

Persis was as amazed as he was. She muttered: "I know—I know—but I can't stand everything."

Tait tried to patch up his broken plan: "Harvey, you've disappointed me bitterly. But I give you one more chance to retrieve yourself. Promise me never to see Mrs. Enslee again."

Forbes shook his head.

The Ambassador could hardly believe his senses. "Oh, Harvey, must the deep friendship of two men always be at the mercy of the first woman that comes along? I beg you to give this woman up."

"I can't."

Tait's voice glittered with anger. "You've got to. I command you to."



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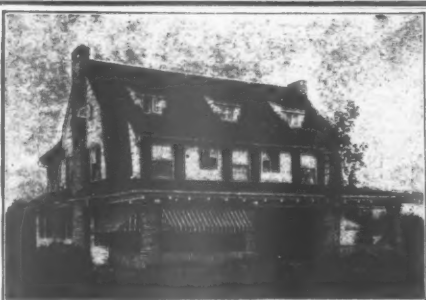
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Forbes set his jaw hard: "I resign my position here."

Tait snapped: "I accept your resignation."

Persis was frantic. "No, no! Oh, don't! I'd rather die than be the cause of a breach between you two." She clutched Tait's arm. "Don't listen to him."

Forbes seized her other hand: "I'll not give you up again. You belong to me."

"You are wrecking my trust in humanity," Tait groaned; then his wrath blazed again: "But I'll break up this intrigue at any cost, even if I have to inform Mr. Enslee."

Persis stared at him in a panic: "You couldn't do that."

Tait had made one step to the door. He hung irresolute before the loathsome office of the tattle-tale. "What in the name of God is a man to do? If I tell your husband, I am a contemptible cad. If I don't tell him, I am your accomplice." He pondered deeply and chose between the evils. "Well, I'd rather have you two think me a cad than to be a criminal and a coward."

He took another step to the door. Persis clung to his sleeve. "Oh, I beg you—" But he shook her loose. "I am going to tell your husband what I saw."

And then the man most deeply concerned appeared in the doorway. Willie Enslee stumbled at the sill and spoke with a blur: "Persis, it's time we were dressing for d-dinner."

Ambassador Tait looked at him in disgust; then at Persis and Forbes, who stood petrified with suspense. The old man shook his head in an agony of decision: "Mr. Enslee, I must tell you—"

He clapped his hand to his heart and spoke with violent effort: "I must tell you—good-night!"

He could not force his tongue to the task. The fierce effort broke him. He wavered. A sudden languor invaded him. His muscles turned to sand. He crumbled in a heap.

Forbes ran to him and with all difficulty heaved the limp frame into a chair that Persis pushed forward. He straightened the arms that flopped like a scarecrow's, and steadied the great leonine head that rolled drunkenly on the im-

mense shoulders. And he spoke to Enslee as if he were a servant.

"Run for a doctor—at once—you fool!"

Willie staggered away, sobered with fright. Persis stood wringing her hands. Through her brain ran the music of the tango; they were playing—

*At the devil's ball, at the devil's ball,
Dancing with the devil;
Oh, the little devil, dancing at the
devil's ball.*

She ran to the door like a fury and shrieked: "Stop that music for God's sake; stop that music!"

The music ended in shreds of discord. The dancers paused in puppet attitudes, then turned like a huddle of curious cattle and drifted toward the door.

Forbes bent down and pressed his lips to the old man's forehead. Liveried servants with wan faces glided through the crowd, and lifting the chair, struggled from the room with its great burden, the old head wagging, the lips laboring at the messages they could not accomplish.

Forbes followed the chair as if it were already the coffin of his ideal among men. Persis waited in a trance, shaken now and then with sudden onsets of ague, but otherwise motionless, her whole soul pensive. Willie hung about her, whining: "I say, old girl, let's be getting home—I feel all creepy. Awfully unfortunate, wasn't it? Let's be getting home. Rotten luck for the Ambassador. Nice old boy, too. Let's be getting home."

Persis did not answer. By and by Willie went in search of his coat and her furs. The other guests dispersed. Outside there was a muffled hubbub of chasseurs calling carriages and cars, of horns squawking, of doors slammed.

Winifred could be heard sobbing in the room where the musicians were putting up their violins and slinking out. Mrs. Mather-Edgcombe was audible in the stillness telephoning to the Embassy.

Persis stood fixed, still staring where Forbes had gone. Suddenly, her face lighted up. Forbes wandered back all bewildered. She forced her hand on him and he took it idly. It was some time



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before he could speak that ultimate word, "Dead!"

Persis wrung his hand and sighed:

"Poor old fellow! I'm sorry he hated me so bitterly. He said he'd fight against my happiness till he died, and now—"

Forbes did not hear her. He was thinking only of the foster father he had lost. He mumbled with dark dejection:

"I'm alone now—alone!"

But Persis' face was overswept with a shaft of light. Glancing over her shoulder and seeing that no one was near their door, she moved closer to Forbes, laid her other hand on his and spoke with all meekness and with a questioning appeal:

"Not alone, Harvey? I'm here?"

He opened his clenched eyes a little and met her upward gaze. He closed his eyes again against her. She waited. Only a moment and then with a sudden frenzy he gripped her in a mad embrace and smote her lips with his. She closed her eyes in ecstasy.

Immediately he started back from her in horror, groaning: "What am I thinking! And he's just dead."

"He's dead, but I live!" She meant only to soothe him but through her low voice an exultance broke like a bugle of

triumph, and she whispered again: "I live!"

So the eyes of Jael must have widened when she had driven the nail through the temples of Sisera.

In her victory Persis remembered discretion and glided aside from Forbes just before Willie entered the room with a servant carrying Persis' furs.

"Come along, Persis," Willie complained. "We can't stay here all night."

"I'm quite ready," she answered with bridal gentleness. Then, "Good-by, Captain Forbes; so glad to have seen you again. Good-by."

She offered her hand formally, and he took it formally, dumbly. As it slipped warmly, reluctantly from his grasp, it was replaced by the clammy, bony fingers of Willie, who was doing his best in the gentle art of consolation:

"Awfully sorry, old chap. These things have got to happen, though, haven't they? Don't take it too hard, and if you get too blue, come round and let us try to cheer you up a bit. We're at the Meurice."

"Thank you," said Forbes. He bowed and did not raise his eyes for fear of what might be smoldering in the eyes of Persis.

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THE MAN AND THE MOMENT

Continued from page 872, this issue

"The spark is not lighted, my friend; her voice lacks enthusiasm and her brows are calm." But he was like all lovers—blind—and only saw and heard what could comfort his heart, and so caught at the straw with delight.

"What ever you asked I would give you. Only say that you will let me set about helping you to be free at once."

Mrs. Howard, however, had not gone this far in her imaginings—the idea had started in her brain, no doubt, but it had not matured yet, and all was hesitancy.

"I cannot promise anything. You must give me time to think, Lord Fordyce."

"Dearest, of course I will; but you will take steps to make yourself free, will you not? I have not asked, and I will not ask you a single question, only that you will tell me when I really may hope."

His voice was deep with feeling, and his distinguished, clever face was eager and full of devotion, as they turned an abrupt corner, and there came face to face with two of their American acquaintances in the hotel.

"Isn't this a charming walk, Mrs. Howard?" and "Yes, isn't it?" and bows and passings on; but it broke the current, destroyed the spell, and released some spirit of mischief in Sabine's heart, for she would not be grave for another second. She made Henry promise he would just amuse her and not refer again to those serious topics unless she gave him leave. And he, accustomed to go his own way unhampered by the caprices of the gentle sex, agreed! So under the dominion of love had he become; for a woman, too, who in herself combined three things he had always disliked! She was an American; she was very young; and she had an equivocal position. But the little god does not consult the individual before he shoots his darts, and punishes the most severely those who have denied his power.

By the time they had reached the Savoy, Sabine, with that aptitude,

though it was perfectly unconscious in her, which is the characteristic of all her countrywomen, had reduced Lord Fordyce to complete subjection, so that he was ready to do any mortal thing in the world for her.

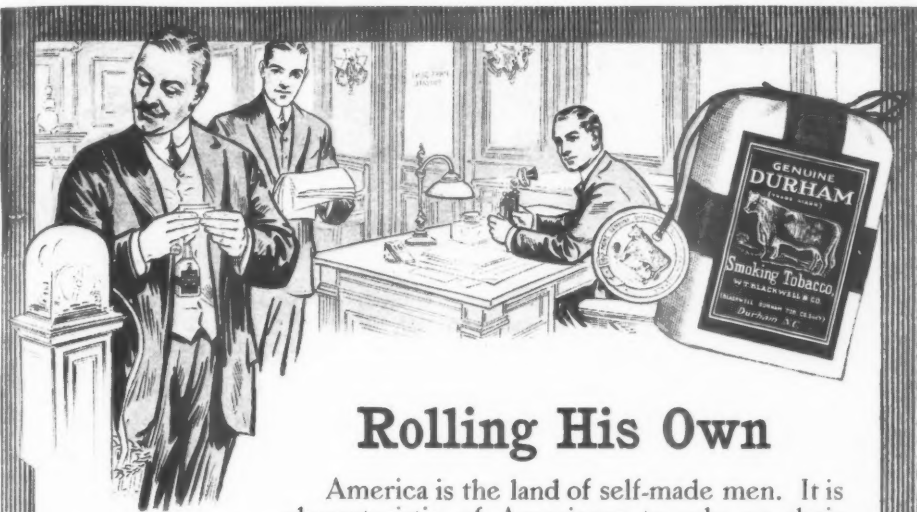
She gave him a friendly smile, and disappeared up the stairs to their sitting-room. She found Moravia indulging in nerves.

"I just want to scream, darling!" that lady said, and Sabine patted her hands.

"Then don't, Morri, dearest," she implored her. "You only want to because your mother, if she had been idle, would have wanted to scrub the floors—just as my father's business capacity came out in me just now, and I fenced with and sampled a very noble gentleman instead of being simple with him. Let us get above our instincts—and be the real aristocrats we appear to the world!"

That night after dinner, waywardness was upon Sabine. She would read the *New York Herald*, at which she had not looked since their arrival at Carlsbad. She glanced at the *Trouville* news, and the *Hamburg* news, with wandering mind, and then her eye fell upon the polo at Ostend, and there she read that the English team had been giving a delightful dance at the Casino, where Mr. Michael Arranstoun had sumptuously entertained a party of his friends—amongst them Miss Daisy Van der Horn. The paragraph was worded with that masterly simplicity which distinguishes intelligent, modern journalism, and left the reader's mind confused as to words, but clear as to suggestion. Sabine Howard knew Miss Daisy Van der Horn. As she read, the bright, soft color left her velvet cheeks, and then returned with a brilliant flush.

It was the first time for five years she had ever read the name of Arranstoun in any paper. She held the sheet firmly, and perused all the other information of the day—but when she put it down, and joined in the general conversation, it



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could have been remarked that her eyes were glittering like fixed stars.

And when, for a moment, they all went out on the balcony to breathe in the warm, soft night, she whispered to Henry Fordyce:

"I have been thinking—I will, at all events, begin to take steps to be free."

But to his rapturous, "My darling!" she replied, with lowered lids:

"It will take some time—and you may not like waiting. And when I am free—I do not know—only—I am tired, and I want some one to help me to forget and begin again. Good-night."

Then, after she got to her room, she opened the window wide, and looked out upon the quiet firs. But nothing stilled the unrest in her heart.

CHAPTER VIII



ÉRONAC was basking in the sun of an August morning, like some huge sea monster which had clambered upon the wet rocks.

The sea was intensely blue, without a ripple upon it, and only the smallest white line marked where its waters caressed the shore.

Nature slumbered in the heat and was silent, and Sabine Howard, the châtelaine of this quaint château, stood looking out of the deep windows in her great sitting-room. It was a wonderful room. She had collected dark paneling and tapestry to hide the grim stone walls, and had managed to buy a splendidly carved and painted roof, while her sense of color had run riot in beautiful silks for curtains. It was a remarkable achievement for one so young, and who had begun so ignorantly. Her mother's family had been decently enough bred, and her maternal grandfather had been a fair artist, and that remarkable American adaptability which she had inherited from her father had helped her in many ways. Her sitting-room at Héronac was, of course, not perfect; and to the trained eye of Henry Fordyce it would present many

anomalies; but no one could deny that it was a charming apartment.

She had really studied in these years of her residence there, and each month put something worth having into the storehouse of her intelligent mind. She was as immeasurably removed from the Sabine Delburg of convent days as light from darkness, and her companion had often been Monsieur le Curé, an enchanting Jesuit priest, who had the care of the souls of Héronac village. A great cynic, a pure Christian and a man of parts—a distant connection of the original family—Gaston d'Héronac had known the world in his day; and after great sorrow had found a hermitage in his own village, a consolation in the company of this half-French, half-American heiress, who had incorporated herself with the soil. He was now seventy years of age and always a gentleman.

What joy he had found in opening the mind of his young Dame d'Héronac!

It was frankly admitted that there were to be no discussions upon religion.

"I am a pagan, *cher père*," Sabine had said, almost immediately, "let me remain so, and let me enjoy your sweet church and your fisher folks' faith. I will come there every Sunday and say my prayers—*mes prières à moi*—and then we can discuss philosophy afterwards, or what you will."

And the priest had replied:

"Religion is not of dogma. The paganism of Dame Sabine is as good in the sight of *le bon Dieu* as the belief of Jean Rivée, who knows that his boat was guided into the harbor on the night of the great storm by the holy Virgin, who posed herself by the helm. Heavens! yes—it is God who judges—not priests."

It can be easily understood that with two minds of this breadth, Père Anselme and Sabine Howard became real friends.

The Curé, when he read with her the masters of the dix-septième and the dix-huitième, had a quaintly humorous expression in his old black eye.

"Not for girls or for priests—but for *des gens du monde*," he said to her one day, on putting down a volume of Voltaire.

"Of what matter?" Sabine had answered, "Since I am not a girl, *cher*

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Maitre, and you were once not a priest, and we are both *gens du monde*—*Heint*!”

His breeding had been of enormous advantage to him, enabling him to refrain from asking Sabine a single question; but he knew from her ejaculations as time went on that she had passed through some furnace during her eighteenth year, and it had seared her deeply. He even knew more than this; he knew almost as much as Simone, eventually, but it was all locked in his breast and never even alluded to between them.

Sabine was waiting for him on this glorious day in August. Père Anselme was going to breakfast with her.

He was announced presently, courtly and spare and distinguished in his thread-bare soutane, and they went in to the breakfast-room, a round chamber in the adjoining tower which had kitchens beneath. The walls were here so thick that only the sky could be seen from any window except the southeastern one, from which you reviewed the gray slate roofs of the later building within the courtyard, the part which had been always habitable and which contained the salons and the guest chambers, with only an oblique view of the sea. Here in Héronac's mistress' own apartments, the waves eternally encircled the base, and on rough days rose in great clouds of spray almost to the deep mul-lions.

“I am having visitors, Père Anselme,” Sabine remarked, when Nicholas, her fat butler, was handing the omelette. “Madame Imogen is enchanted.” And she smiled at that lady who had been waiting for *déjeuner* in the room before they had entered.

“So much the better. Our lady is too given to solitude, and but for the meteor-like descents of the Princess Torniloni and her tamed father,” (he used the word *apricoisé*—“*son père apricoisé*.”) “we should here see very little of the outside world. And of what sex, madame, are these new acquaintances, if one may ask?”

“They are men, *cher père*—bold, bad Englishmen!—think of it! But I can only tell you the name of one of them—the other is problematical—he has mere-

ly been spoken of as, ‘My friend’—but he is young, I gather.”

“We must welcome these Englishmen,” he said. He had heard that, in their upper classes, the Englishmen of to-day were still the greatest gentlemen left, and he would be pleased to meet examples of them.

“They will arrive at about five o'clock, I suppose,” Sabine announced. “Have you seen about their rooms, Mère Imogen? Lord Fordyce is to have the Louis XIV suite, and the friend the one beyond; and we will only let them come into our house if they do not bore us. We shall dine in the *salle-à-manger* to-night and sit in the big salon.”

Madame Imogen Aubert had been in straits in Paris, when Sabine had heard of her through one of her many American acquaintances to whom Madame Aubert gave lessons. Stupid speculation by an over-confident, silly French husband just before his death in Nevada had been the reason. Madame Imogen had the kindest heart and the hardest common sense, and did credit to a distant Scotch descent. She adored Sabine, as indeed she had reason to do, and looked after her house and her servants with a hawk's eye.

After *déjeuner* was over, the Dame d'Héronac and the Curé crossed the causeway bridge, and beyond the great towered gate entered another at the side, which conducted them into the garden. Here, whatever horticultural talent money could procure had been lavished for four years, and the results were beginning to show. It was a glorious mass of summer flowers, and was the supreme pleasure of Père Anselme. He gardened with the fervor of an enthusiast.

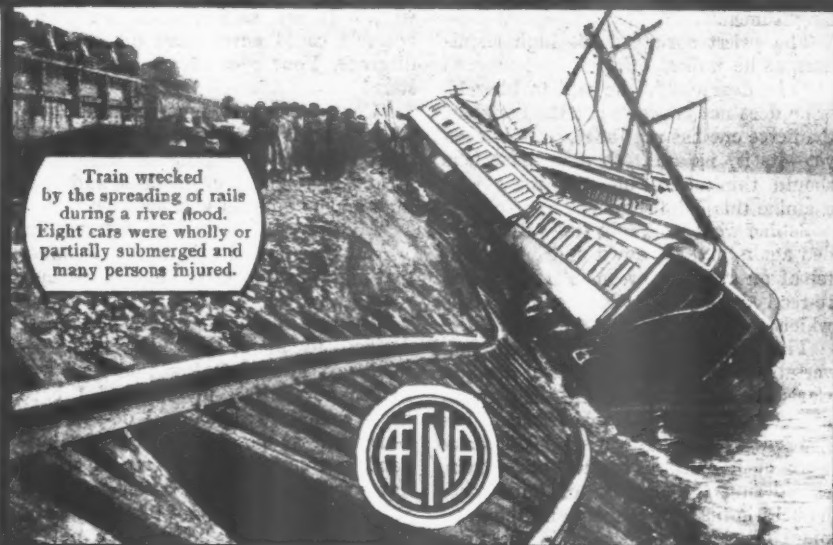
They spent two hours in delightful work, and then the Curé went his way—but just before he left for the hundred yards down the road where his cottage stood, Sabine said to him:

“Regard well Lord Fordyce to-night, *mon père*. It is possible I may decide to know him very intimately some day—when I am free.”

The old priest looked at her questioningly.

“You intend to remove your shackles yourself, then, my child? You will not

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leave the affair to the good God—no?"

"I think that it will be wiser that I should be free soon, *mon père—le bon Dieu* helps those who help themselves. *Au revoir*—and do not be late for the Englishmen."

The priest shrugged his high shoulders, as he walked off.

"The dear child," he said to himself. "She does not know it, but the image of the fierce one has not faded entirely even yet—it is natural, though, that she should think of a mate. I must well examine this Englishman!"

Sabine went back into the walled garden again, and sat down under the shelter of an arbor of green. She wanted to re-read a letter of Henry Fordyce's, which she had received that day.

They had had long and frequent conversations in their last three days at Carlsbad, during which they had grown nearer and still better friends. His gentleness, his courtesy and diffidence were such incense to her self-esteem, considering the position of importance he held in his own country and the great place he seemed to occupy in the Princess' regard. And he was her servant—her slave—and would certainly make the most tender lover—some day!

On their last afternoon, he had taken her hands and kissed them.

"Sabine," he had said, with his voice trembling with emotion, "I have shown you that I can control myself, and have not made any love to you as I have longed to do. Wont you be generous, dearest, and give me some definite hope—some definite promise that, when you are free, you will be my wife?"

And she had answered—with more fervor than she really felt, because she would hide some unaccountable reluctance:

"Yes; I have written to-day to my lawyer, Mr. Parsons, to advise me how to begin to take the necessary steps; and when it all goes through, then—yes, I will marry you."

But she would not let him kiss her, which he showed signs of desiring to do.

"You must wait until I am free, though. My marriage is no tie; it has never been one—after the first year. I will tell you the whole story, if you

want to hear it; but I wish to forget it all; only it is fair for you to know there is no disgrace connected with it in any way."

"I should not care one atom if there were," Henry said ecstatically. "You yourself could never have touched any disgrace. Your eyes are as pure as the stars!"

"I was extremely ignorant and foolish, as one is at seventeen. And now I want to make something of life—some great thing—and your goodness and your high and fine ideals will help me."

"My dearest!" he had cried fervently.

And Sabine had said to the Princess that night, as they talked in their sitting-room:

"Do you know, Morri, I have almost decided to marry this Englishman—some day. You have often told me I was foolish not to free myself, and I have never wanted to; but now I do—at once—as soon as possible, before my husband can suggest being free of me! I have written to Mr. Parsons already; and I suppose it will not take very long. The laws there, I believe, are not so binding as in England—" And then she stopped short.

"The laws—where?" Moravia could not refrain from asking; her curiosity had at last won the day.

"In Scotland, Morri. He was a Scotchman, not an American.

The Princess' eyes opened wide.

"I have never seen him since the day after we were married—there cannot be any difficulty about getting a divorce—can there?"

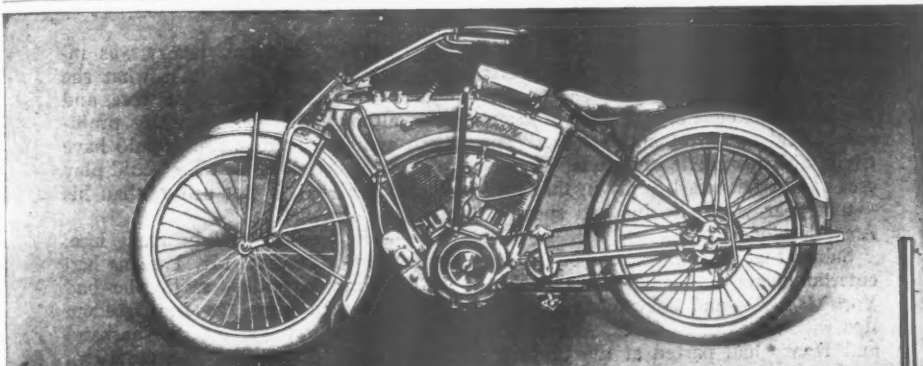
"None, I should think," the Princess said shortly, and they kissed one another good-night and each went to her room.

But Moravia sat a long time, after her maid had left her, staring into space.

Fate was very cruel and contrary. It gave her everything that most people could want, and refused her the one thing she desired herself.

"He adores Sabine—who will trample on him; she always rules everything; and I would have been his sympathetic companion, and would have let him rule me!" Then something she could not reconcile in her mind struck her.

If Sabine had never seen her husband



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since the day after she was married, what had caused her to be so pale and sad and utterly changed when she came to her, Moravia, in Rome, a year or more afterwards, and to have made her break entirely with her uncle and aunt. The secret of her friend's life lay in that year—that year which Sabine had spent in America alone.

Sabine that same night read of further entertainments at Ostend in the *New York Herald*—and shut her full, firm lips with an ominous force. And so she and Henry had parted at the Carlsbad station next day with the understanding that when Sabine could tell him that she was free, he would be at liberty to urge his suit, and she would give a favorable answer.

She thought of these past things now for a moment while she re-read Lord Fordyce's letter. It told her, there in her Héronac garden, in a hurried P. S., that a friend had joined him that moment at Rouen, and clamored to be taken on the trip, too, claiming an old promise. He was quite a nice young man—but if she did not want any extra person, she was to wire him, and the interloper should be ruthlessly marooned. The post had evidently been going, and the P. S. must have been written in frightful haste after the advent of the friend—for his name was not even given.

Sabine had not wired. She felt a certain sense of relief. It would make some one to talk to Madame Imogen and the *Curé*.

Then her thoughts turned to Henry himself with tender friendship. So dear a companion; how glad she would be to see him again! The ten days since they had parted at Carlsbad actually seemed long! Surely it was a wise thing to do, to start her real life with one whom she could so truly respect; there could be no pitfalls and disappointments! And his great position in England would give scope for her ambition, which never could be satisfied, like Moravia's, with just social things. She would begin to study English politics and the other

great matters in which Henry was interested. He would find that what she had told him at Carlsbad was true, and that, although he was naturally prejudiced against Americans, he would have to admit that she, as his wife, could play the part as well, if not better, than his own countrywomen.

Yes—she would certainly marry him, perhaps by next year. Mr. Parsons had written only yesterday, saying he had begun to take steps, as her freedom must come from the side of her husband—who could divorce her for desertion. She could not urge this plea against him, since she had left him of her own free will.

"He will jump at the chance, naturally," she said to herself, "and then, perhaps, he will marry Daisy Van der Horn!"

She put the letter back in her basket below the flowers she had picked, and left the garden to return to the château. She was just entering the great towered gate of Héronac where resided the concierge, when she heard the whirr of a motor approaching in the distance, and she hurriedly slipped inside old Berthe's parlor. She disliked dust and strangers, who fortunately, seldom came.

She was watching from the window until they should have passed—it could scarcely be her guests; it was quite an hour too soon—when the motor whizzed round the bend and stopped short at the gate! It was a big open one, and the occupants wore goggles over their eyes; but she recognized Lord Fordyce's figure, as he got out followed by a very tall young man, who called out cheerily:

"Yes—this must be the brigand's stronghold, Henry; let's thunder at the bell."

Then for a moment her knees gave way beneath her, and she sank into Berthe's carved oaken chair. For the voice was the voice of Michael Arrans-toun—and when he pulled off the goggles, she could see, as she peered through the window, his sunburned face and bold blue eyes.

The next installment of "The Man and the Moment" will be in the April Red Book, on all news-stands March 23rd.